

# COUNTRY LIFE

THE JOURNAL FOR ALL INTERESTED IN  
COUNTRY LIFE AND COUNTRY PURSUITS.

# ILLUSTRATED.

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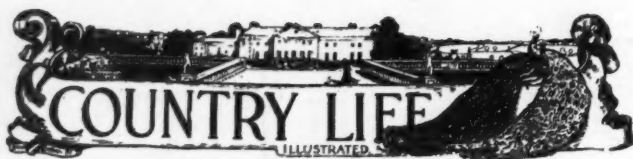
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THE Journal for all interested in

Country Life and Country Pursuits

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### EDITORIAL NOTICE.

The Editor will be glad to receive for consideration photographs, instantaneous or otherwise, besides literary contributions, in the shape of articles and descriptions, as well as short stories, sporting or otherwise, not exceeding 2,000 words. Contributors are specially requested to place their names and addresses on their MSS. and on the backs of photographs. The Editor will not be responsible for the return of artistic or literary contributions which he may not be able to use, and the receipt of a proof must not be taken as evidence that an article is accepted. Publication in COUNTRY LIFE alone will be recognised as acceptance. Where stamps are enclosed, the Editor will do his best to return those contributions which he does not require.

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## RIFLE RANGES FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

A COLONIAL correspondent writes to the *Pall Mall Gazette* in terms which will make the English boy, whether at a public school or not, envy his over-seas cousins. His subject is the colonial schoolboy and his rifle and the way in which that boy is allowed to use it. "Every Saturday afternoon," he writes, "we were marched to the range, and fired fifteen shots at three distances. The Government provided the range, paid the markers, gave the ammunition free of cost, and gave us several pounds in prizes each Saturday. Once a year we shot for a champion bowl and money prizes given by Government, and other prizes presented by enthusiastic citizens. If we did not think the fifteen shots a week enough, we were allowed to buy as much extra ammunition as we liked at cost price, and two or more cadets could go to the range and practise at any hour." And this is how they do things in the colonies. There is something particularly fresh and sound in the picture of those happy boys, with their pockets full of silver won on Saturdays, and their independent target practice on weekdays, enjoying the social prestige and real claim to manliness which their ability and training to take part in national defence confers. It would be no bad thing if enthusiastic citizens here would follow the example of our friends across the sea, and encourage young England to shoot in the same liberal manner.

The *Pall Mall's* correspondent states that in the colony of which he speaks, which we are perhaps not wrong in identifying as one of the Australian group, the boys all enter as cadets at the age of twelve, and are good irregular soldiers and "dead shots" at fifteen. After these early experiences we cannot wonder that he

considers it "very strange that English boys are not taught to shoot at school." He might think it stranger still if he knew how many ranges where public schoolboys used to shoot have been closed, often for very trivial reasons. He might be surprised to hear that a range close to Charterhouse was abolished, on the ground that it "caused annoyance," though the targets stood on land occupied by the then Minister of War; that at least one large London public school is about to abandon rifle shooting altogether, because three out of four ranges within reach have been closed, and it is necessary to go to Staines or Bisley to fire a shot at 500yds. Imagine the horror which a proposal to close the school cricket ground, or even the school bathing-place, would excite! Yet the closing of a school rifle range, compelling the boys to go further and fare worse, and handicapping the efficiency even of those boys who do shoot, has taken place more than once without causing remark.

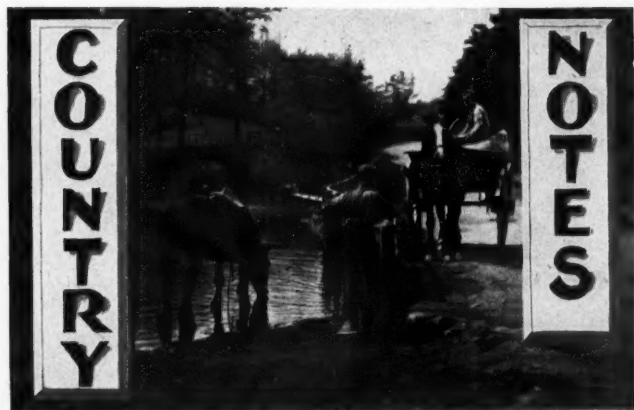
It cannot be denied that if any large number of boys cared very much whether they learnt to be good shots or not, school ranges would have multiplied, and the armouries and magazines of the cadet corps would have been as full of rifles and ammunition as the boys' lockers are now of cricket "material," and every boy would be as keen to be the temporary possessor of a rifle as he now is to own a bat. It is well known that this is not the case, and that up till now rifle shooting has, as a rule, been rather less popular as a recreation than any of the regular school games. But times are likely to alter, and opinion with them. Some at least of the great schools intend to make the use of the rifle general, and not confined to the cadet corps, though Dr. Warre's suggestion of fifteen as a minimum age for boys to begin to shoot compares curiously with the go-ahead "colonials'" limit of twelve. It is very desirable that before long all public schoolboys of a much earlier age should be trained as recruits are in the regular army, and learn the "rudiments," that is, the loading, sighting, firing, and steady poise of the Service rifle by practising with the Morris tube in small galleries, such as are now attached to the drill sheds of all the corps at Aldershot. But if rifle shooting is to "go of itself" among our public schoolboys, and be handed on as a taste and amusement to the great mass of the other boys of England as the taste for games has been, it must become really popular among the boys themselves, and this is only likely to come about by giving them ample time and opportunity for practising at the targets.

It is most unlikely that any great percentage of boys will take to drill for its own sake, or become enthusiastic on tactics. But there is every chance that if sensibly officered and properly encouraged they will become keen on shooting. What is wanted is the same eagerness to rush off to the range and to begin shooting as there is now to rush out into the playing fields and begin "punt about" with the football or to practise at the nets. Without trying to rival Daniel Defoe in an additional "Essay on Projects," it is not difficult to suggest how this may be done. In the first place, give the boys not one but two or three targets, or more, to shoot at on a range quite close to the school. Make it a 200yds. range if a longer one cannot be had, or, if not, follow Mr. Baillie Grohman's recipe, by which he shows that on one acre of ground thirty separate targets can be made, with a range of 100yds., at which thirty persons can practise at one and the same time. But as most public schools have been built as far out in the country as possible, where land is not dear, there should be no difficulty in securing good ranges up to 500yds. Even at Charterhouse the new range at Puttenham, five miles from the school, only cost £350. It is just four miles and three-quarters too far off, but the Charterhouse boys have won the Ashburton Shield nine times, even under these disadvantages. The weakest side of public school volunteering is that at present only boys in the cadet corps shoot, and of these a great number never become good shots. The range accommodation is limited, and the restrictions under which this can be used are such as do not make it easy for boys to obtain individual practice at their own convenience. As Bisley approaches, the school team gradually monopolise the range, and the others have to wait till the winter terms. The remedy is to increase the range limits, so that at all times of the year not only those in the Eight, but all boys, whether in the cadet corps or not, could shoot against each other, or practise as they liked. Competition of every kind should be encouraged, and ammunition should be sold cheap.

In Bombay, to glance once more at the over-seas English boy, there are several school cadet corps. These boys can buy any quantity of ammunition they like at 2½d. for ten rounds. For 5d. they can have a pleasant afternoon's shooting. This opens a pleasant method for our over-supplied public schoolboys to get rid of their pocket money. At one public school more than £250 per annum is taken as profit from the "tuck shop." A fifth part of this would pay interest on any sum which a 500yds. rifle range would be likely to cost, together with a good surplus for ammunition. There should be as great elasticity as possible in the use of the range; small parties of boys should be able to use it at any time. Supervision would be needed; but when



is that not forthcoming in the cricket field? Senior boys, masters, and professionals all combine cheerfully to further the cricket. A part of this energy could probably be diverted to the range. We believe that any school which is at present ill-provided in the matter of rifle ranges, by appealing *now*, when the lessons taught by our adversaries are fresh, to the old boys and connection of the school, could raise without the least difficulty enough money to buy and equip any quantity of ground and targets necessary. They could also obtain support from Government on terms as generous as the Treasury is ever likely to grant. Our public schools should make the most of the opportunity, and add to their training an actuality which will be welcomed by the class for whom they provide, and serviceable to the country. They have been undeniably successful in spreading and handing down to the less well endowed boys in the State-aided schools a taste for all kinds of games and athletic pursuits, and have claimed with good reason to have improved the national physique and the national character. But their chance has now come to take a lead in a real and serious change and diversion of surplus energy. They cannot do better, while they have it in their power, than to teach the rising generation the use of the national weapon, and by so doing to make this a popular and national pastime.



THE British public, taken as a whole, preserved a proper calm over the victories which were reported early in the week, with the exception, of course, of the Stock Exchange, which is a home of hysteria in England. All the rest of the world felt that well as things looked on Tuesday morning, when these words were written, there was still a great deal of hard and stubborn fighting before us. Although we hope nothing of the kind will happen, we venture to say that even if there were a serious defeat of Lord Roberts himself in store for us, the British public would still remain confident and determined.

Among the "fastest on record" performances, that of the City Imperial Volunteers will certainly take high place. Within eight weeks the force was organised, furnished with an equipment, armed, transported over a distance of 6,000 miles, and provided with horses. But that was not all. Within the same period the horses were trained, the men travelled all the distance to the Free State, and, being subjected to the ordeal of fire for the first time, behaved with conspicuous gallantry. It is a magnificent performance, and "Civis" does well to call attention to it in the *Times*.

Of course no end of stories are in circulation about General French and Colonel Baden-Powell. The former is known among officers as one of the two or three smartest cavalry leaders whom we possess. He is known among the men as "silent French," and is noted for the rigid discipline which he enforces. A contemporary has a good story of a trooper who, having been sentenced to confinement to barracks for fourteen days in considerably fewer words, exclaimed, as he was being taken away, "Old French don't bark a bit, but, crikey, don't he blooming well bite."

As to Colonel Baden-Powell, the *Daily News* of Tuesday contained a perfect mine of entertainment. For it had occurred to somebody to go and see Dr. Haig-Brown, Baden-Powell's old head-master at Charterhouse, and Dr. Haig-Brown seems simply to have revelled in reminiscences of his pupil, whom he remembered as quick and ready of wit, as spirited up to the verge of impudence, as a delightful mimic, as a first-rate athlete, and as a fair scholar. But the most extraordinary of all the accomplishments of "B.-P." was that he could draw one sketch with his right hand and another with his left at the same time. This strikes us as being almost as difficult a feat as that of becoming champion pig-sticker of India, as he did, or that of captaining, as he has, the splendid defence of Mafeking.

Quite a good little story of the manner in which the Boer child is trained by copy-book maxim in the way that he should go has come to us in a private form. It befel that certain troopers of Babington's cavalry brigade had occasion to enter a farmhouse from which the occupants had departed rather hastily. On the table was a child's copy-book. Between the two top lines in a large round hand was the model phrase in Dutch. It ran thus: "The English are an ignorant race." Well, perhaps they are; perhaps we ought to have known more about the Boers before we began this war; but in spite of our ignorance we are beginning to show that we are not a people to be trifled with.

Doubt has been expressed in some quarters whether from the point of view of the Imperial Yeomanry generally, it was entirely prudent to permit the formation of the body of young gentlemen known as the "Duke of Cambridge's Own." But the doubt will probably be found to have been unnecessary, because these troopers being really gentlemen are far less likely to give themselves airs towards the common soldier than men whose claim to the title of "gentleman" is perhaps a little doubtful. Certainly as they paraded in the shed and as they talked in the ship afterwards, they showed an appearance of ability to take the rough with the smooth and to endure the hardships of a soldier's life as any men who have left this country in the Queen's service. It was written of them, with justice, that they recalled memories of great deeds at Lord's and on the river, of bold riding to hounds, of Bisley Common, and of records of big game shooting. This was a witness of truth, and it may be as well to point out that the gentlemen of this country who, after public school and university life, have pursued field sports with a will at home and abroad are really far more likely to stand roughing it than the class from which the ordinary soldier is drawn.

Probably not since the winter of the Crimean War has country life generally been at so low an ebb as during this winter. There are no county balls, no hunt balls, few house parties; there are no dancing parties; all are away at the war. There is scarcely a house that is not in mourning; not one, it is to be said only too surely, that is not in deep anxiety. Withal we have had a full dose of influenza and more than the full allowance of wintry weather. And the demands on our purses are so frequent that economy is a necessity with very many if they are to bear their share of the charitable burdens that the nation is loyally accepting.

Disagreeable as the snow has been, it was welcome in the country. We have not had a really hard winter for four years, and this season things all had the appearance of coming too early. But for this spell of hard weather, fruit buds especially would soon have been in a condition to be nipped by the first sharp frost. That which has occurred will administer a check without doing any real harm. Some plough-lands, again, never fine down for seed so beautifully under any other condition as in the thaw after a heavy fall of snow. Certainly, however, it has not been very good for the early lambs; yet, according to our oldest inhabitant and weather-lorist, the omens all point to a particularly fine spring, and injury done by the bitter blast will soon be repaired.

The prodigious floods following the snowfall and its thaw ought to guarantee us at least from a repetition of the waterless experiences of our last two summers. But still when one sees these immense volumes of water going useless to the sea it seems a policy of little foresight that fails to find storage for a portion of it, at least such portion as might suffice for a village's needs in the summer, and might be stored so easily in the hilly country in a convenient valley where any liberal-minded landlord would surely permit a reservoir to be made by the district or village councils, if it were within their powers. And within their powers, or within some power, it certainly ought to be, even if the power of "commandeering" a site for the reservoir, as they even now "commandeer" road metalling quarries, ought not to be added thereto.

Not often does there come to us of Southern England the experience of this year, the experience of seeing the snow melt away after covering the face of the land for several weeks, giving again to the eye the normal, restful green. To many of us it will be something of a revelation that the change can mean so much, that the rest can be so important. And if after a week or two only of the snowfall we can be sensible of this relief at its removal, how much greater must be the relief to the dwellers in lands where the snow lies not exceptionally for weeks, but normally for months. We can form, out of our experience of this winter, some little notion of the joy that must be theirs when the Arctic winter breaks. The severity and the long continuance of the snow have borne especially hardly on the poor at a time when coal is at a price that is almost prohibitive for them.

We have seen a letter in the *Field*, and yet another in a local paper, speaking of the curious fact that the correspondents had seen a butterfly (in one case it was a "peacock," and in the other a "tortoise-shell") flying about over the snow during the time of the late fall. The fact is curious, no doubt, but it will seem less singular to those who are bee-keepers than to the correspondents of these papers. Bee-keepers know very well that in snowy weather the gleam off the white surface is apt to delude bees into the idea that the sun is shining outside. In pursuance of that idea they go forth from the hive, and probably die of the cold and inability, with stiffened wings, to return to their home. Many bee-men make a tortuous entry for winter to the hives, especially designed to keep out the glint off snow. In all probability the "peacock" and "tortoise-shell," without doubt hibernating specimens, were deluded in a like manner. The only point hard to understand is how they could have kept enough warmth to enable them to use their wings for flight at such low temperature. Possibly they were hibernating in some hole in a wall that a chimney traverses. The snow would mean big fires, and the big fires a vivifying warmth for the dormant pulses of the butterflies.

In the midst of much despair, that has often been voiced in these columns, about the future of our salmon fisheries, we believe there was a note of hope struck at the meeting, lately held at the Fishmongers' Hall, of representatives of many fishery boards in England and Wales, the Prime Warden of the company presiding. The meeting, after some discussion, resolved to ask the Board of Trade to appoint a Royal Commission to enquire into the present conditions of our salmon fisheries, and suggest ways in which they might be improved. This is good, but the manner in which the resolution was "rammed home," as it were, by the comments of two speakers, Mr. Hotchkiss, of the Wye Board, and Mr. Willis Bund, of the Severn Board, was even better. The former expressed the hope that the work would be taken in hand without delay; the latter expressed the opinion that good would come if competent persons were appointed on the Commission. This last is a proviso that we sincerely trust will engage the attention of the Board of Trade. The former pious hope, that the work may be done without delay, will, we doubt not, be kept in mind by the "competent persons" when they have been appointed. Delay, indeed, in a matter of such pressing importance, would be a powerful argument against their competence.

Apart from the sad death of the keeper Woods, and from the point of view of the considerable section of the population who neither hold shares in the Crystal Palace nor reside in the salubrious suburbs which surround it, the escapades of Archie and Charlie have been distinctly entertaining. They were elephants; they were the property of Lord George Sanger; they had been performing at the Palace; and "some naughty little boy or girl" had shown to them "More Beasts for Worse Children." Now learned pigs can read, and elephants are cleverer than pigs, besides being pretty closely related to them, and one stanza of this clever book was too much for them. It was—

"Or why the Wanderoo should rant  
In wild, unmeaning rhymes,  
Whereas the Indian elephant  
Will only read *The Times*."

This was more than elephantine flesh and blood could stand, and Archibald and Charles resolved to make a demonstration.

Of them, as of the American in the poem, it may be said that "whate'er they set their hands unto, they did their level best." Archibald was off like a tornado through the concert-room, where the music did not soothe his savage breast at all, through the partition, up the north nave, into the grounds, out of them through a brick wall, and proceeding on his way to Beckenham before anybody could say Jack Robinson. That was partly because everybody was frightened, and it would have been no good saying it, and so nobody tried. But once outside, "le terrible Archibald" behaved pretty well, and found a refuge for the night in the pathless jungles of Penge and Bromley. But Charles turned iconoclast, and no bull in a china shop, or Cromwellian zealot, or well-born undergraduate of Christ Church with a grudge against the Dons, was ever a circumstance to him.

He toyed with Shakespeare and the Queen, he tore off the arm of no less a person than Henri François D'Aguesseau, Chancellor of France, he took no notice of circus attendants, or even of policemen—what accomplishments we expect in our London police, by the way—he would not be backed into his stall, he would not even eat bread and cyanide of potassium. At last, with the help of another elephant, harnessed to a chain which a plucky keeper had placed round the leg of Charles, the offender was secured. Then, at ten of the night, Mr. E. J. Churchill, summoned specially from London, gave the fierce

beast an express bullet in the ear-hole, while his son, to quote a contemporary, and to show how careful one ought to be about decimal points, "who fired a 4.50 sporting express, popped two shots simultaneously into his heart." So ended one of the most exciting of recent elephant hunts. If the description be correct, Mr. Churchill's son must be a strong man, for a 4.50 express would be a 12-pounder, or thereabouts, and to fire two barrels of it simultaneously would be simply colossal. A 4.50 is a good deal smaller, but it kicks quite hard enough.

Lord Ellesmere appears to have a very humorous gamekeeper on his estate at Warley, where an eagle has recently been seen. This individual told an enquiring newspaper correspondent that (we quote from the report verbally) "the bird is being fed by crows, which have been seen carrying garbage and worms, for which they burrow in the snow-covered ground, for their new friend, and it has been seen taking food from their beaks. Upon the approach of a keeper the crows give a distinct kind of signal to the big bird, which immediately disappears." The funny thing is that this is printed in a London paper with an enormous circulation. Probably the editor knows even less of the gamekeeper than he does of crows and eagles.

The possibility of the Royal Agricultural Society of England possessing a permanent show ground of its own after the year 1902, when the present arrangements for holding its nomadic series of exhibitions ceases, will cause no surprise amongst those who understand the inner workings of the agricultural world. Indeed, when a powerful sub-committee, which included amongst its members such experienced authorities as Sir Walter Gilbey and Mr. Cecil Parker, was appointed, it was pretty generally expected that the existing system of holding the Royal every year in a different part of the country was doomed; but should the recommendation which has been issued be confirmed, there will no doubt be many difficulties to surmount.

In the first place there is a very great difference of opinion amongst the members of the Royal upon the subject of the locality to be selected as the site of the permanent show yard, some thinking that a central position with a good railway service should be chosen, whilst others contend that a national show, such as the Royal, should be held in the immediate vicinity of the metropolis. Unfortunately, however, the necessary hundred acres or so are not likely to be obtained, except at a great cost, near to any important city, and experience, moreover, has taught the Royal that Londoners are not particularly enthusiastic in their patronage of livestock shows. Moreover, the Royal Agricultural Society is not a wealthy body, in spite of its long list of members, and consequently if the suggestion of the sub-committee is adopted some difficulty may be experienced in raising a sufficient sum to purchase the land and erect the necessary buildings. Still, in the long run, this would be a more economical arrangement than the present one, as a migratory show is more expensive than a stationary one; and the success of the Dublin Society, which always holds its fixtures at Ball's Bridge, may no doubt assist the members of the Royal in arriving at a decision upon this most important question.

Does Shire horse breeding really pay? Lord Wantage made an average of £157 12s. 9d. each for fifty-three of these horses. The greater number were breeding stock, and had probably not done much to earn any part of their living. More than thirty of these were three years old and under, and had only, say, two and a-half years or less of "keep" to their debit. Fourteen were brood mares, which had probably brought a profit before from their foals. On the whole it looks as if there would be a very considerable margin of profit on this amount of stock, on balance between keep and sale. Last year the average for nearly 1,000 animals disposed of at various sales was only £84 17s. 5d. We wish some statistics of the average age of these were to hand. Perhaps the *Live Stock Almanac* will add this next year.

We noted last week that Mr. Long's promise to grant permission for beasts intended for slaughter to be moved to three great markets from the Norfolk and Suffolk area, where foot and mouth disease has appeared, was really an exercise of the "dispensing power," and made the Contagious Diseases Animals Act of no effect. The first results are to hand. The disease has broken out at Biggleswade, two shires away. There are sixty-six animals on the premises affected, and nine cattle actually caught the disease. It was not notified in Norfolk till January 29th, so the spread is rapid. It is so contagious that even a strong wind is believed to carry the infection to animals to leeward. The permission given to move animals intended for slaughter from the infected areas to such a centre of the cattle trade as Norwich is perfectly inexplicable, and the maintenance of other restrictions, while this was removed, was almost certain to prove useless; and it has.



A correspondent writes: "I have come across the following in a quaint old work entitled 'The Art of Rydinge.' The author's name was Thomas Blundell, and he wrote apparently in the reign of Queen Mary. 'I. How to correct that Horse that will fall downe to the ground, when he is provoked to doe any thinge which he would not willingly doe: Cause some expert footmenne having a good cogell in their hands to be somewhat nigh you, at such time as you ride your horse, to th' intent that when they perceive the horse maketh any offer to lye downe, they may be redy with their cogell or staff to threaten hym, and to fray hym with a terrible voyce, jesture, countenance, and by cruelly loking hym alwaies in the face, more or less, according as time and occasion shall require. He may also be corrected by the helpe of a footman having in his hand a squyrt full of water, which he must squyrt in the horse's eyes, when he off'reth to lye downe. But the remedy last mentioned is to be us'd by riders of small skill—for an expert rider will correct any vice by true arte, without the helpe of any such toyes.

II. Corrections to be us'd agaynste restiffness, when the riaeer lacketh art, and knoweth not by order of Rydinge how to gette the masterye of his Horse, and to make hym know hys faulte: Let a footman stand behind you with a shrewd cattte teyd at one end of a long pole with her belye upwarde, so as she may have her mouth and claws at liberty. And when your horse doth stay, or go backwarde, let him thrust the cattte betwixt his thyes so as she may scratch and bite hym, sometime by the thyes, sometime by the rompe. But let the footman and all the standers by threaten the horse with a terrible noyse, and you shall see it will mak him goe as you would have hym, and in so doing, be ready to make much of hym. Also the shrill crye of a hedge hog, being strayt teyd by the foote under the horse's tayle, is a remedye of lyke force, which was prov'd by Maister Vincentio Respino, a Napolytan, who corrected by this means an old restif horse of the Kinge's in such sort, as he had much ado afterwards to keep hym from the contrary vice of running awaye."

## HUNTING FROM LONDON.

THERE are few ways of hunting I have not tried—hotels, lodgings, a hunting-box, and hunting from home when I have had one. Few men have travelled more miles to snatch a day's sport in the midst of a busy life. But I do not know any time that I look back upon with more pleasure than the season I hunted from London. Many people will not agree in this, and yet there is something particularly charming about the contrast of starting from London in the early foggy morning, and finding yourself about 11 a.m. sitting beside a covert listening to the cheer of the huntsman, and hoping to hear the note of the hound. But even had I enjoyed it less than I did, it would still have had to be done, since I had to live in London, and to live without hunting is a very maimed form of existence. Possibly there may be others in like case among the readers of COUNTRY LIFE who would like to know how I did it, and to whom my experiences may be useful.

The season before I began to hunt from London I had been in the Vale of Aylesbury, and among my horses was a certain



Photo.

HOUNDS BEING DETAINED.

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clever sturdy Irish mare. Now, to hunt successfully from town you want a placid horse, one that will stand quietly at the station while he is boxed and unboxed, and that will not take half a day's work out of himself by fretting and trembling and kicking

in the box. A horse should be well clothed for a journey. Like ourselves, they like to travel warm, and like us, too, they are more apt to get a chill when tired at the end of a long day. There was a special train from town for the members of the hunt, and I soon found that I had unwittingly dropped into informal membership of a very pleasant club. Very delightful when there was no sign of frost were those journeys down. The pleasures of anticipation were keenly enjoyed; never are they more vivid than when training to a meet. Naturally, the men who hunt from London are keen sportsmen. If it were not so they would not take the trouble.

We were a varied company: stockbrokers, of course—I believe the "House" has more good sportsmen among its members than any association of Englishmen of the



Photo.

A PLACID HORSE.

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same size—a banker, a barrister, a solicitor, one parson, a soldier quartered in London, and some prosperous shopkeepers; but we all met on common ground, exchanged matches and cigars and gossip and opinions on horse and hound. Arrived at our destination we found an inn, kept by a sportsman too, and the horses were unclothed, the rugs rolled up with a card with the owner's name, and after a cup of coffee or a Macdougall, according to taste or inclination, we trotted off to the meeting-place in pairs.

The Master was keen, the hounds were good, and though the country was rough, and had its share of big woods, the sport was excellent. One fifty minutes. I still remember, when a stout old fox died in a ditch, with his face to his foes, fairly run to death. It was very genuine sport, though not Leicestershire. In spite of hounds, in spite of terrifying fences of wire, of bad foxes, Leicestershire is still the cream of hunting. Yet we enjoyed ourselves, and rode hard, too. I have seen four men down at once at a cramped place. Then, when the day's sport was over, back in the dim mist of the winter's afternoon, with the roads squelching pleasantly under the horses' feet, to the inn. There we saw to our horses, competing eagerly for the pails of gruel (I never saw gruel better made), and then tea and eggs and buttered toast. "The special's ready, gentlemen, please," and we went off to see to the boxing of the horses. Two rugs and a hood, and four flannel bandages, *loosely* put on (the horses were dried over by the ostlers if wet), and then we were free to lean back in the corner of a first-class carriage; and there is, believe me, for I have tried most, no more comfortable railway carriage than our English "first." Now light a cigar. How about wet clothes? Well, if you have a long ulster to put on and a rug, there is little danger, and then, as you pull slowly and luxuriously at a cigar, reflect over the sport and note for future use the mistakes made in the run, and how you might have seen more of it. But a reader may ask, why not keep your



Photo.

A BIG WOOD.

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my flask a little dry light port, with plenty of cigars, and I really think that some of my happiest days have been spent in hunting from London.

## RECOLLECTIONS OF . . . STEEPLECHASING.—IX

IN this article I propose to say a few words about military steeplechasing, a subject which I just touched upon, but had not sufficient space to do full justice to, in my last. It was in the year 1866 that the National Hunt Committee took over the sport of racing over a country, then in the zenith of its popularity and prosperity. There it remained for about fifteen or sixteen years, and to that period must we go back for the records of most of the best horses and the finest horsemen connected with the history of steeplechasing in the British Army.

The first steeplechase I ever saw was when I was a boy at Eton and ran over to Windsor to see the Household Brigade Steeplechases. There were plenty of good riders in the Brigade in those days—"Charlie" Ker, "Doddy" Johnstone, "Curly" Knox, "Lummy" Harford, and others—and it may have been the sight of their prowess in the saddle which fired me with the ambition to go and do likewise some day.

This was in the sixties, and having soon afterwards joined the Service, I naturally accepted the first mount I was offered. It was not an altogether desirable one for a novice, as the horse in question was a hot-headed, hard-mouthed brute, and he bolted out of the course into the crowd, knocking down an old woman who was too fat to escape. The Grand Military Gold Cup, at that time run over the fine old Rugby course, was in 1870 won by Mr. Ray's Donato, ridden by Mr. Pritchard. The

Gunners were represented by poor little "Driver" Browne, who finished second on Captain Turner's David, and that good but roguish horse Fervaques, a Grand Prix winner, but who finished nowhere, ridden by Captain Cole Magennis, who always rode Captain Sandeman's horses. The Household Cavalry also ran Mr. Gilbert Stirling's The Corsair, whilst Lord Charles Ker's good horse, Moose, steered by Colonel Knox, and Mr. Pickford's Oporto, a wonderful jumper, did their best to win this trophy for the Foot Guards. No less than sixteen real good hunters went to the post that year for the Grand Military



Photo.

THE RETURN JOURNEY.

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horses at a more convenient centre? To that I reply that I would much rather have my horses under my own eye than away, for if you have a bad groom he neglects them, and if you have a good one the independent life demoralises him. Only one thing you must have—to end as we began—a quiet horse and a good feeder. In practice I found my horses did very well.

Were I a rich man I still would not take a lad with me, for the long lounge at a public with the ostlers, too often "fallen angels of servitude," is sure to be bad for him. In



Hunt Cup, whilst Donato also won the Light-weight Grand Military Sweepstakes; and amongst the best performers in the saddle were Mr. Pritchard, Captain Harford, Mr. "St. James" (poor Greville Nugent), Mr. Burnett, then a subaltern in the R.H.A., Lord Charles Ker, Captain Johnstone, Mr. Willoughby of the 9th Lancers, and the "Driver," a very light weight, but a fine powerful horseman, and the best all-round military steeplechase rider of his day. He met his death under singularly painful circumstances at Esher Station in 1875, during the first Sandown Park Meeting.

A winner at the Aldershot Steeplechases in 1871 was Mr. Pickford's Oporto, who afterwards became a bad roarer and sunk to the position of a "let-out" hunter in a well-known Winchester dealer's stable. He was, however, a great performer, and well known with the Hambledon Hounds, with which he was a favourite mount of "Rowdy" Lane's—then a gay young subaltern in the Rifle Brigade. I wonder if he—the man, not the horse—goes as well now as he did in those days.

At the "Gunnery" Meeting, held over a good natural course between Woolwich and Eltham, Major Byrne, afterwards General Byrne, and the owner of Amphion, won the Gold Cup with Jerome, the Sweepstakes with that good horse Charleville, and the Challenge Cup with Brown Bread—the first two ridden by "Driver" Browne, and the last by "Daddy" Annesley, a desperately keen sportsman, who had beautiful hands, but was rather handicapped by his height. Amongst other horses and men who took part in this meeting were Venator, a fine jumper by Gemma di Vergy, owned and ridden by that neat horseman Captain Wortham, and the Grand Prix winner, Fervaques, ridden as usual by Captain Magennis.

The 10th Hussars that year held their meeting over a course laid out at Down Farm near Southall, and the Prince of Wales ran a horse for the Challenge Cup named Champion, who was ridden by poor "Donjy" Bulkeley, and finished second to Lord Valentia's Wellington, ridden by Captain Wood. In the following year Major Byrne won the Grand Military Gold Cup, at Rugby, with Charleville, and the Military Weight-for-Age Stakes with Jerome, the former being ridden by Mr. Browne, and the latter by Mr. Annesley. Captain Gilbert Stirling's Outpost, a remarkably fine jumper, who won the Royal Artillery Gold Cup in 1875, finished second to Jerome. There were some high-class chasers seen out at the Grand Military Meeting in 1873, in which year no less than sixteen useful horses went to the post for the Gold Cup, including Mr. Heron Maxwell's Revirescat—who won by ten lengths, in the hands of Mr. "Wenty" Hope-Johnstone—Chimney Sweep, Sylla, and Gaston; whilst Mr. Thorold's good horse Merlin, by Gunboat, beat Assault—who had finished second in the Gold Cup the day before—and nine others in the Light-weight Grand Military. Captain Ray's Marc Antonie, the next winner of this much-coveted military trophy, was ridden by that accomplished horseman, Colonel Harford: but he might hardly have beaten "Charlie" Ker's Jorlocks if that handsome little horse had not overreached very badly during the race.

The year 1875 was a great one for jumpers, and perhaps there never were before or since so many great cross-country horses in training. It was in that year that one of the best jumpers and stayers ever seen, Pathfinder, beat an exceptionally high-class field in the Grand National; that those two clinking good Welsh-bred chasers, Goldfinder and Gazelle, took the two principal events at the Grand National Hunt Meeting, held that year at Sandown Park; that the high-class four year old Regal made his *début* over a country; and that there were such clinking good horses as Clonave, Palm, Revenge, St. Aubyn, Congress, La Veine, Industrious, Jackal, Farley, and many others of the same stamp, running over fences and hurdles.

The four best horses in the Army just then, probably, were Derviche, a French-bred horse by Fitz Gladiator; good old Chimney Sweep, a wonderfully hard horse and a faultless fencer, who started life as a troop-horse in the 7th Hussars; Highland Mary, a high-class mare and a beautiful jumper; and Caramel, a very useful mare over hurdles.

A very favourite stable with soldiers was that of Mr. "Fog" Rowlands at Epsom, and many military races were won by horses trained therein. Lord Marcus Beresford was one of its principal patrons, and when its master died Lord Marcus started Jones, who had been poor old "Fog's" head lad, as his private trainer at Epsom. What a lot of good horses they had there, at different times; but somehow it never prospered—perhaps it was too big an establishment for one man to manage—and when Jones died he was quite on his last legs. He was a fine horseman and a thoroughly honest trainer; but as a jockey he never knew what the other horses in a race were doing, and as a trainer he overdid his horses terribly. Lord Annaly, then the Honourable Luke Wight, and a subaltern in the Scots Guards, had a very useful soldier's horse named Rathcline in those days, and this I remember especially because, on one occasion, he was looked upon by the connections of Jones's stable, which included several heavy plungers, as a real good thing for a little £40 Plate at Bromley. Now it so happened that entered for this same race was a young

Irish chaser named Torpedo, by Gunboat, for whom, acting for a friend of mine, I had on the previous day offered £1,000, without its leading to a deal. I therefore concluded that this was a good horse brought over to pick up two or three little certainties before being flown at higher game, as was the custom with Irish horses in those days; and I went down prepared to have "a dash." So heavily did the Epsom division plunge on Rathcline, that the bookmakers for once in a way laid a fair price about the Irish certainty, and the good thing came off all right. Colonel Arthur Paget, of the Scots Guards, also had some useful jumpers with Jones at different times, amongst them Chilblain, a very smart little horse, who won two "Grand Militaries," ridden by poor little Billy Morris of the 7th Hussars.

A very good field of soldiers' horses was that which went to the post for the Grand Military Gold Cup in 1880, the last year in which it was run over the old Rugby course. The winner on this occasion was the Welsh-bred Cymrw, by Beneveni, out of an h.b. mare belonging to a Pembrokeshire farmer. This mare was the dam of a very good chaser named Adieu, and all her produce were useful, so that when Mr. Dalbiac, of the R.H.A., went down to see Cymrw, who had then, if I remember right, only run once—when he fell—and who had done nothing but carry his breeder to market till he was five or six years old, 500 sovereigns was the price he was asked for him. Major Murray's Botanist, who finished second, ridden by Mr. Lee-Barber, was also a useful horse; Gold Dust, who finished third, had won a lot of races in the North, and cost his owner, Mr. Maudsley of the 16th Lancers, £600, I think; Collegian, a very high-class chaser, was bought from Captain Machell for £800 on purpose to win this race; High Priest had won the Bristol big hurdle race, and Jupiter II. was an exceedingly good horse when he liked; whilst Violante and The Swine were both useful performers. Cymrw, who was a beautiful jumper over a big country, though he always took liberties with small fences, stayed for ever, whilst he always ran best when he was racing with something in front of his field; so that his owner took him to the front almost at once, and kept him there to the end, winning easily by twenty lengths. This horse was a good example of the old type of chaser, who could jump anything and go on doing it all day. I think he was one of the very best stayers ever seen, and he would probably have won the Grand National in the following year if he had not met with an accident a fortnight before the race.

In 1881 the National Hunt Committee passed their rule dealing with the construction of steeplechase fences, about which, its causes and its results, as well as the steeplechasing which we have seen since, I shall have something to say in my next article.

OUTPOST.

## Our Portrait Illustration.

OUR frontispiece this week is the portrait of Lady Randolph Churchill, widow of the late Lord Randolph Henry Spencer Churchill, and mother of Mr. Winston Churchill, the special correspondent who is doing exceptionally brilliant work in South Africa for the *Morning Post*. Lady Randolph Churchill, who was the daughter of the late Mr. Leonard Jerome, is taking a very leading place among the great ladies of American extraction who are showing their sympathy towards our soldiers in their time of suffering. The hospital ship *Maine* was to a very large extent her idea, and she is now at the front on her errand of mercy.



TOO many books about the war, and nearly all of them coming out much too soon, will be the general verdict. Most of them, which are by way of being historical, might very much better wait until the war is over, and until there has been time to form an idea of the proportionate value of events and policies; for it cannot be repeated too often, although there is very little use really in saying it at all, that there ought to be an essential difference between journalism and literature, and that the messages which come red-hot from the front are not necessarily worthy to be placed between covers. An exception may, perhaps, be made in favour of the late Mr. George Warrington Stevens's "From Cape Town to Ladysmith," for his brilliant pen is stilled, and the concluding chapter by his familiar friend, Mr. Vernon Blackburn, who is also a very flashing writer, will be full of interest.

Another book, begun by a hand which will write no more, and finished by a living man and a familiar friend, is to be found, as yet unbound, between the covers of the *Strand Magazine*. Mr. Grant Allen had often discussed with Dr. Conan Doyle the end of the Hilda Wade stories, and now that Mr. Grant

Allen is dead Dr. Doyle has finished the story. By the way, the question has been raised once again whether Mr. Grant Allen was or was not justified in using so many pseudonyms, and it is one of some little personal interest to writers of novels or articles.

Personally I am all in favour of anonymous writing where anything in the nature of criticism is attempted, and for this reason: Critics, nearly all of them, live in a society of some kind, and encounter a great many of the persons who produce more or less creative work. The cases are therefore numerous in which candid criticism may lead to social unpleasantness, and in which the temptation to avoid such unpleasantness is considerable. Most considerable of all is it when an author of a harmless book is also a pretty and charming woman. Why break butterflies on the wheel? That is a reflection which comes to one instinctively.

But has man or woman a right to pose in the capacity of novelist as A. B. C., in that of poet as D. E. F., in that of essayist as G. H. I., and so forth to the end of the alphabet? At first blush one is inclined to say "No!" This is a case of obtaining circulation, and cloaking the vice of over-production, by false pretences. But there is something to be said for the practice. In the first place, if the public and the critics cannot find the signs of over-production, staleness, and repetition, in the books themselves without knowing that the author has many names—that is to say, without having the crib—there is no great harm done. In the next place, it is next to impossible for any author writing under his own name or under a single pseudonym to convince the public that he has more than one vein. Versatility is regarded as a sin, and the writer who, being versatile, can hoax the public into believing that he is half-a-dozen men, is really a very clever person and entitled to his reward.

Exploiting the war has become the almost universal practice, but Messrs. Methuen may be congratulated upon having hit upon perhaps the most ingenious idea of all. They are bringing out a book called "Prisoners of War," for sixpence, with coupons attached, and they are offering a prize of £100 to the person who names the day and month on which peace will be signed. Probably the firm have taken advice on the legal aspect of the scheme, but to me it sounds about as nearly a case of lottery as possible.

"The pieces chosen are at once satisfying and germinative." This is a extract, not from a gardening book, but from a note on Mr. E. G. Speight's "New English Poetry Book" (Horace Marshall). The word is a curious one, but it has its significance. A germinative poem, I apprehend, is one that will develop in the mind of the reader, and eventually take root in his memory—which is a pretty idea. But what about "satisfying"? It is surely not so happy an epithet. It suggests a literary meal in the nature of Yorkshire pudding; and just think of that as germinative.

A book by Mr. Louis Tylor, called "Sweetness and Light" (Richards), is attracting some little attention, and the extracts from it which are published are certainly clever. It may not be generally known that Mr. Tylor was until recently actively engaged in the coal trade of South Wales, and that he has always been keenly interested in that useful institution known as the "Miner's Permanent." That he should have taken to discussing great problems in a manner which the *Academy* describes as witty, humorous, and clear, is proof positive that there is such a thing as versatility.

A word or two may well be given to the two volumes of the Sports Library newly issued by Mr. Unwin. In the first, "Riding, Driving, and Kindred Sports," by Mr. T. F. Dale, is to be found the work of a master hand, and of a man who can be witty also; but the readers of *COUNTRY LIFE* know his style well. On Football, Hockey, and La Crosse, Messrs. Fegan, T. Lindley, Prevost Battersby, and J. C. Isard discourse with the highest authority. The first two, Internationals both, are well known. Mr. Battersby is a well-known writer, and is at present in South Africa; Mr. Isard has been a very famous player of La Crosse.

Books to order from the library:

- "Savrola." Winston Spencer Churchill. (Longmans.)
- "Merry-Ann." Norma Lorrimer. (Methuen.)
- "The Waters of Edera." Ouida. (Methuen.)
- "An Octave." W. E. Norris. (Methuen.)
- "Wiles of the Wicked." W. Le Queux. (White.)
- "Oliver Cromwell." Lord Rosebery. (Melrose.)

LOOKER-ON.



WHEN the towns, with their mills, steam power, and modern machinery, began to absorb the country people, they set the seal of decay and death upon village industries. For a time at any rate "machine-made" was a password which would introduce goods of almost any class, just as of yore the term "best London made" carried so great a weight with it; and this absorption, combined with rapid production, closed the door to individual skill save that of the inventor. Much of the deftness, the individual ability, for which hand-work provided an outlet, is consequently in a moribund or dormant state. Now we are beginning to see the evil of it all, and some of our great men, notably John Ruskin, have set them-

selves to once more adjust the balance, and to bring back something of the old state of affairs without its attendant disadvantages. So we have the Scottish Home Industries Association and other organisations for a similar purpose, and the Tweed Industry in Lewis, wood-carving all over the country, pottery-making at Kirkby Lonsdale and other places, while in several parts of the English Lake District—Mr. Ruskin's own home for twenty years prior to his death—spinning, weaving, wood-carving, and other crafts are being slowly resuscitated with reasonable success, while all the world is astonished at the ability displayed by simple country-folk.

Not the least interesting by any means of these village industries is the Langdale Linen Industry of flax-spinning and weaving by hand, which was revived at the instigation of Mr. Ruskin in 1883, through the instrumentality of several ladies and gentlemen, but chiefly by the efforts of Mr. Albert Fleming, a resident of that picturesque vale. Of this work Mr. Ruskin speaks in his "Fors Clavigera," describing it as of the deepest interest to himself, and deeming the successful attempt to bring back the old industry of the spinning-wheel to the homes of Westmoreland as "a means of greatly increasing the people's happiness, and effectively their means of support by the sale, already increasing, of the soundest and fairest linen fabrics can weave or field-dew bleach." For many years, in fact, the fabrics and designs produced in Langdale were



LANGDALE FROM SKELWITH FOLD.



submitted to Mr. Ruskin for criticism and suggestion, but, owing to his condition of health, for some time before his death that had not been possible. It is related that his interest in the details of the work turned out was most pronounced. When anything which pleased him was submitted, he expressed his delight by a characteristic flow of language; when, on the other hand, some ugly design aroused his artistic resentment, he pronounced his displeasure most emphatically and in no mild terms.

When the work was first started there were many difficulties to be overcome. Old hand-loom, for instance, had been dispersed or destroyed for fuel. One, however, was found in the good old market town of Kendal, in some musty corner of a broker's store. Having secured the loom, the next difficulty was to set it up, and for a time this defied the efforts of the promoters. At last, however, someone turned up an engraving of a fourteenth century mosaic at Florence, and by means of this illustration, wherein a weaver was seen at work, the refractory pieces of the loom were at last joined together, so that operations could proceed.

If you travel to Windermere by the railway, which drew from Wordsworth so many strong denunciations, or, better still, to Waterhead by the more picturesque sail along the winding, river-like lake, you will find yourself, when the centrally situated village of Ambleside is reached, about three miles by road from the Lake of Elterwater, or four miles from the village which lies beyond it and goes by the same name. Those who know the Lake country well pronounce Elterwater one of its fairest spots. Embosomed among low tree-clad hills, backed up by the mountains of Bowfell, Conistone Old Man, and the Langdale Pikes, whether under the brilliant contrasts afforded by a blazing sun, or when creeping mists roll slowly up the hillsides, and the calm lake reflects as in a mirror green slopes and mountain tops, Elterwater is equally beautiful.

Elterwater village itself is picturesque or ugly according to the point from which you see it. Viewed from Red Bank, or anywhere along the high ridges, its straggling houses, with their characteristic slate chimneys, seem appropriate and harmonious to the dale in which they nestle. From the main road, chiefly on account of the muddy ponds for the ducks and the ramshackle shelters for fowls, the prospect is less pleasing. Close by the little bridge which spans the oft-flooded course of Great Langdale Beck you can see on one side the gunpowder factory, and on the other, close by the road to Colwith and Conistone, the little white cottage known as St. Martins. This is the home of the Langdale Linen Industry, the centre to which all the work is gathered for sale and distribution.

Of the ladies who visit the Lake District in the season, comparatively few reach St. Martins, though Mr. Baddeley mentions it in his peerless guide-book. Here Mrs. Pepper, under whose management the industry is conducted, attends every day save Wednesday, together with her mother; the latter, though now advanced in years, is still an active and capable spinner herself. The flax, which is brought from Ireland, is hand-spun by the cottagers chiefly during the winter months, and then woven on hand-loom made after the pattern of the original one unearthed at Kendal. This work is done at night after the

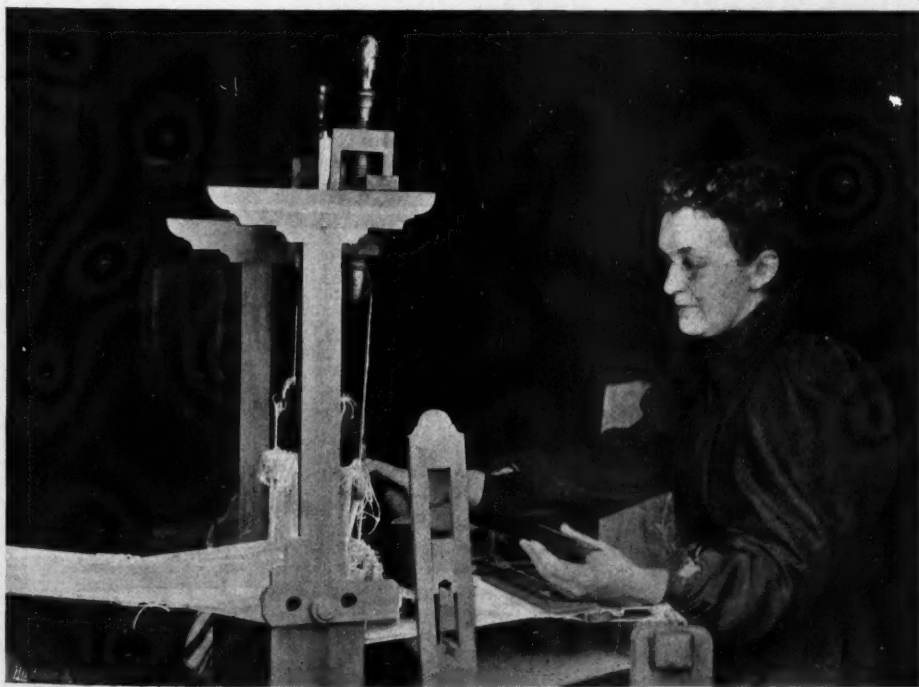


ST. MARTINS FROM ELTERWATER COMMON.

ordinary household duties have been discharged, and the most capable workers can earn five or six shillings a week. Some fourteen or fifteen kinds of linen are made, including the celebrated Langdale poplin, of which material a dress was worn by the Princess of Wales not long ago at the christening of one of her grandchildren. Nor is the Princess of Wales the only distinguished patron of the industry, for royal children and the children of many of our most aristocratic families have worn dresses of Langdale linen trimmed with the Greek lace, also a local product, to which we shall allude shortly.

The linen when woven is bleached at St. Martins by sun and air and water on the grass. As no chemicals or machinery are used for finishing, it is believed that Langdale linen will prove as honest and durable as that produced in the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries. Some Italian linens of the Middle Ages have been reproduced with absolute fidelity both in colour and texture. For coloured linen the flax is dyed before it is woven, in order to secure a strand uniform in colour. The linens are beautiful in quality and texture, varying from very coarse to delicately fine material, and it need hardly be said their durability is unequalled. They may be used for articles of dress, such as blouses, aprons, children's smocks, dress trimmings, sheets, pillow-slips, towels, book-covers, blinds, and many other purposes. Beautiful effects can be produced by blending silk and linen, or by using two different colours for warp and weft. The linen also affords a basis for unique and artistic needlework, which is likewise practised in Langdale. Embroidery on linen with both flax thread and silk, and also what is known as Greek lace, exquisite in design and workmanship, are among the principal classes of work. Copies of antique embroidery are made. One beautiful bed-spread was copied exactly, and sold for £20.

One of the home workers, an old lady over eighty years of age, does the most beautiful embroidery in fac-simile of old French brocades. She also works a kind of glorified darned netting, which is a marvel of skill and



HANDLOOM WEAVING.

delicacy. Another worker is an invalid girl who has been lying down for years. She was formerly employed by Mr. Ruskin to copy MSS., but when he ceased to have work of that kind, she was handed over to the Langdale Industry. Her work is characterised by great originality and artistic taste. She has, for instance, invented an embroidery in which parts of the design are stained before working with fast dyes, which produce a very charming effect.

Nor is the work entirely restricted to linen. Woollen cloths are also produced. We were shown some splendid soft warm cloth made from the wool of sheep fed on the neighbouring mountain called Wetherlam, and spun in the valley at its foot. We also saw a large quantity of the embroidery and Greek work, a selection being shown in the accompanying illustration.

Mrs. Pepper, whose portrait we have taken seated at her loom, gives lessons in Greek lace, pillow lace, embroidery, and other work, as well as in spinning and weaving. She taught Ellen Terry to spin for her part in the character of Marguerite in "Faust," and since then has had many orders from her for household linen. She also had the honour of being called to Sandringham for a month in order to teach the Princess of Wales and the students in the technical school there established by Her Royal Highness. Any lady of taste who visits the Lake District should not forget St. Martins at Elterwater. The articles on sale and the work which has been done cannot fail to be interesting; while to those who have time at their disposal, the chance of learning a style of work which can never become common or out of date should not be neglected.

We believe that the demand for hand-made materials will steadily increase, as people are more and more beginning to feel



ARTICLES MADE AT THE LANGDALE LINEN INDUSTRY.

the desirability of clothing themselves appropriately and having beautiful objects round them. But if only as a memento of a sojourn in Lakeland, the possession of some article of decoration or apparel will give lasting pleasure. Thanks to the Langdale Industry, a lady may now take back with her a dress-piece in memory of the lovely valley through which she coached or rode a-wheel, or the climbing man may have a woollen knicker suit the wool whereof has been grown and spun on the slopes of his favourite mountain.

PERCY LUND.

### *The Ubiquitous Starling.*

JUST now, far away in the depths of the country, with dull days and grey mists supervened, bird life truly hangs heavy on the wing, and hedgerows and brown fields lie deserted. Deserted, that is, save for one or two birds, the ancient rook and the lively starling, for *Sturnus vulgaris* is apt to take his pleasure in dense flocks composed of his own kind. A "murmuration" of starlings, so says an old book, is the right name to give to a flock of starlings. Not a bad name either, all things considered, for the curious sound the bird emits. With winter this bird seems to spring up everywhere—by rick-side, turnip field, down, and flower garden—regardless of man, perhaps frequenting his society, greatly dependent on him for his daily food: worms and beetles, grain and seeds, supplemented by succulent roots. Turnips are hollowed out in hard winters, and even hips and haws are numbered among edible Leries. With us, starlings increase rather than decrease, notably in the neighbourhood of our river; the reeds are frequented to get at their seeds, and often completely beaten down in the pursuit. Evidence of starlings is that of destruction; and, in many parts, they are looked upon with great aversion. They delight in burrowing into the nearest rick thatching, destroying it pretty well wholesale. Reed thatching valued at £100 is said to have been fairly ruined in a few nights. Farmers, indeed, once took to fern thatching in Dorsetshire, until they had ridded themselves of the marauders.

It is necessary to see creepers and ivy to realise what starlings can do, and to find wreaths hanging lonely, white "droppings" on every leaf, gravel paths strewn, to gauge their depravity. Many a time and oft have I gone round a house to witness the destruction they have wrought, to assist with a clap-net in arresting the depredators and scaring them away from old haunts. "Starlings will oust pigeons from their dovecotes," so I am told by an old countryman who had heard or read of 780 starlings taking refuge in one night in a Lincoln dovecote during an October night of unusual severity.

Indeed, in Dorsetshire, it is a common belief that the starling frequents the pigeons' nests to suck the eggs, or even attack the young. Those who know the starling at first hand are not slow to accept the theory as a probability. The starling lives, like the forest pony, where nothing else can find a livelihood; by the seaside he will find decaying shell-fish, sand-worms, and all kinds of dainties; on lawns, by the aid of his strong bill, he will pull up wholesale roots of grass, and disinter beetles, larvæ, and worms out of reach of any stronger bill. I do not think any other bird of his size has greater "purchase" in the use of the bill. Certainly others do not attempt the hard ground he seems to make so light of in pursuit of food. Abroad, though not in England, he meets with appreciators. I have seen him caged in Italy, and also dressed as *Beccafico*; this probably on migration, when he eludes frost by Southern travels, and is landed in nets by the bird-catcher. Blown inland by gales on the West Coast of France, on the direct line of route for Gibraltar, birds of all kinds are warmly received, and fall ready victims even to street loafers. Long lines and horsehair nooses are the *modus operandi*, carried in sacks, with grain and seeds for bait. Night is the time chosen for the march, the reach of cliffland being the favoured site. Lanterns facilitate work, which consists in pegging out lines, and each noose is spread with grain inside it. With daydawn the birds come forth to feed, from rock crannies, bushes, low cover; and, in a very short space of time, hundreds of



LANGDALE COTTAGER SPINNING.



birds are imprisoned in nooses. These are the so called *grives*, which fill the foreign market; many *are* thrushes, many are not. They are hastily plucked, cleaned, and put on the market to the tune of four or five sous a dozen.

I have myself detected many kinds of food in these imperfectly cleaned specimens—worms and larvæ, the latter in abundance, not altogether palatable to the English feeder. Perhaps, however, we Englishers lose, in some ways, a variation of feeding stuff; but the starling, though he figures doubtless among the slain, is too strong to be readily partaken of; his flesh is bitter, even though he may be carefully served, and too rank for the fine gourmand. In our country he is destroyed simply as a marauder and a rick wrecker, or simply as vermin. Yea's ago starlings were more valued than now. They were considered rather fine singers; whistling was taught them, and, taken quite young from the nest, it is possible something may be done with them. I possessed two which I considered talkers (rather poor at conversation), but they were tame and full of pranks, very lively before rain, and would run about the dinner table before everyone, helping themselves readily, moreover, if permitted. Esau and Jacob both died early, falling a prey to a cat; but they were certain!

not bad comrades to a solitary man, and full of *chic*, alacrity, and a certain "go."

The plumage also in its iridescence is indeed beautiful, especially about the time of the breeding season. Flights of starlings are said to assume enormous proportions in severe weather, and to take curious shapes in flight. As an athlete the starling beats all other birds in running—he must cover immense distances. There is no doubt his flight also is exceedingly swift; it seems done chiefly at a curious angle. His love for sheep, not entirely disinterested, causes his name of sheep stare to be a popular one; and on the Dorsetshire Downs he is appreciated by the shepherd, and probably is useful to him in various capacities. As an insect exterminator the starling is certainly useful, and compensates for the mischief of his other talents; but, as a visitor, he is odious near the house, and must relentlessly and ruthlessly be chased away.

For his song—of a sort—his cheery, lively note, his curious, ruffled throat, and continuous movement, he is interesting to everyone, and life would be duller to many men were it deprived entirely of *Sturnus vulgaris*.

DISCIPULUS.



GARDEN making has always been an architectural matter, except during a comparatively short period, when the mother art was all but forgotten in our own country, and the art patrons of the day conceived the brilliant idea of dispensing with all form and order. Their attitude of mind cannot fail to strike us as strange when we consider the glorious works of the past, both in England and abroad, and compare them with the efforts of our grandfathers. One can only suppose that they worked in wilful ignorance of what had been done in days gone by, or they would surely have become conscious of their lack of method. But what they did we have been content to follow and even to admire. In our haste to obtain a luxurious growth of rare shrubs and plants, we have lost sight of the subtle charm that lies in a fusion of well-designed architecture and symmetrical spaces with natural foliage, and above all we have ignored the sense of fitness that a frankly designed garden bears to the architecture of the house itself.

It is significant to contrast the descriptions of gardens that appear in our current horticultural literature with those of John Evelyn, or any writer on the subject a few centuries ago. In the one horticulture is the only point of view that is dealt with; in the other a keen appreciation of design balances the interest taken in the growth of plants, or in any new species that may come under notice. The vicissitudes of garden design in England have been described at length in several recent books, so it will be unnecessary to do more than refer to them briefly here.

Garden making, distinctly architectural in aim, may be said to have reached our shores with the English Renaissance, in the

time of Henry VIII. and Elizabeth.

In general conception it was probably Italian, but in treatment just as essentially English as other building work of the period. Through Elizabeth's reign magnificent pleasures were the attributes of every large house, but still the work was confined to the lesser lay out—that is to say, to the definitely enclosed portions. In contemporary plans of Kirby, for instance, the avenues and approaches of a later day are as yet undreamt of. This, however, was grafted on to garden schemes—still practically Elizabethan in conception—about the time of William and Mary, and was probably due to the influence of Le Notre and his great deeds at Versailles.

There is little doubt that had it been possible to have sailed over England in a balloon in those days it would have presented just such a bouquet of gardens as appears in the old map in the

text of a bit of country near the Hague. It shows an intricate network of dykes, full of interesting designs, in which the paths, borders, fountains, and even the statues are plainly visible. There is one, for instance, in the environs of Ryswick, in which the house and dependencies lie round a square court, and are approached from the road between two groves, with glades radiating from a circular pool in the centre of each. Then comes the forecourt, laid out in plots of turf, and walled off from small flower



HOUSE AND LAWN.

gardens on either side. Through the house a long terrace runs right and left above the main garden, which is set out with four large fountains, two pavilions, covered alleys, turf plots, and flower beds.

This was what a garden meant in those days, and it is possible that Milton's description of the garden of Eden may have had something to do with the growth of the indefinite idea

that by degrees supplanted the older meaning of the word, but certainly for many long years after his time fine gardens continued to be laid out as noble architectural conceptions, and it was left to Pope and the sycophant epigram writers of his day to decry the last remnants of a grand old tradition. Still, these things lingered into the time of the early Georges, and then came the downfall, when all that was stately and dignified had to make way for the arrogant futilities of the landscape gardener and his satellites.

So the art of garden making was forgotten, and architects, such as they were, made incomplete schemes for building, extending no further than the walls of the house itself. There were, of course, exceptions to the rule, and the more enlightened among them still included suggestions for the treatment of the grounds. But in the majority of cases these were ignored by their patrons, who weakly followed the prevailing fashion, dispensed with architecture, and called in the services of a landscape gardener, who dealt with the ground that should have been garden in strange ways peculiarly his own. Then came the Waverley novels, opening the eyes of a rather dull public to fresh beauties in wild scenery;



GENERAL PLAN.

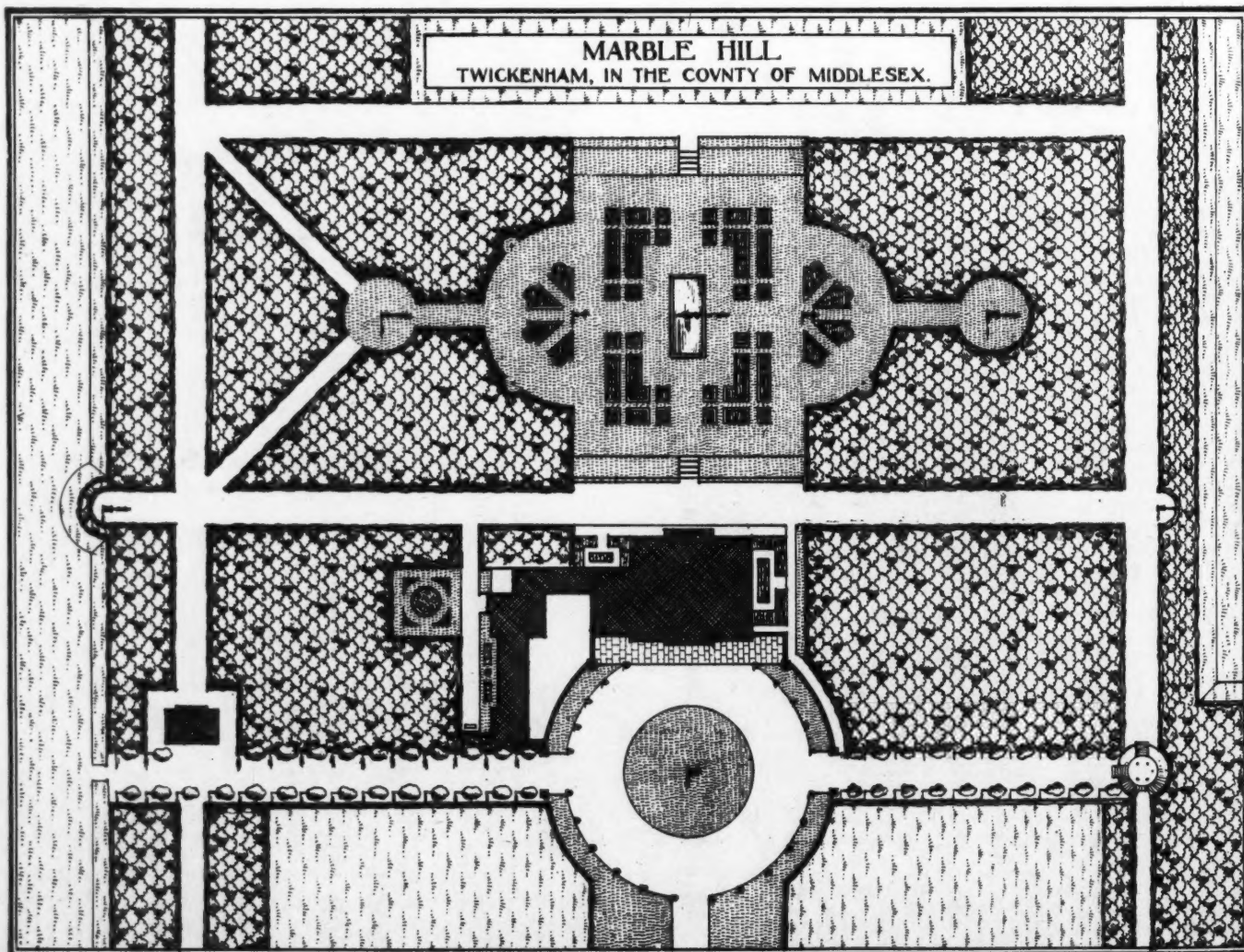
and since minds of a certain calibre can only entertain one idea to the exclusion of another, wild scenery became the rage, and none were in the fashion if they did not try to imitate it at their very doors.

Perhaps, had he known that his writings were to bear this fruit, no one would have been more distressed than the author himself, for in his lament over the destruction of an old garden he had known as a boy he shows how fully he valued the charm of its quaint order and seclusion.

So through the Waverley novels a fresh stimulus was given to the prevalent idea, which lasted well into the seventies. Quite recently—that is to say, within the last ten years or so—there

has been a gradual revival of interest in the lost art, coupled with opposition from the fashion that is dying out. But that opposition is vanishing now.

The matter seems to have been regarded from two distinct points of view. There is that of the cultured man, who delights in harmonies of form and colour, who loves the seclusion of a walled garden and all that fancy may suggest in flower beds. And there is that of the scientific florist and collector, whose interest lies in the production of flowers for show purposes, in



PLAN OF FORMAL GARDEN.



rearing exotic plants, and coaxing the growth of specimen trees. The devotees of the first view were ever ready and willing to call in the aid of their self-constituted opponents, but the botanists were loth to admit that a garden could gain any charm from the interference of the designer. Now the florist and collector is always more or less anxious that his pinetum should show examples of every known species, and that flowers, mosses, and ferns from every quarter of the globe should each have a special nook in his garden. And in this, to a certain extent, the artist is with him, but his effects are to be obtained with a few simple materials, and yet he is asked to employ a palette, the range of which is positively bewildering. How is he to fuse such a multitude of varied colours and growths into one picture and still retain the dignity of the masses? He only asks for stone of varied textures—this he must have to make a framework—a little turf, a fair bouquet of flowers, some English yew, and box for borders, some water, and a delicate fancy or two in wrought iron. This will do for his palette. The background may be left to the forester, but with a plea that he will employ for the most part those trees that rear a lofty cliff of green overhead and leave broad leaf-strewn avenues amid their trunks. For there is little dignity in the picture where spirelets of pine break the level plains of beech and elm. This reluctance on the part of the artistic to make provision in their gardens for every known species of plant is never likely to find favour in the eyes of the nurserymen—and his catalogues have been the ruin of many a fine old place in the country—for they start on the supposition that with such a repertoire as we have nowadays it would be the height of folly not to make use of it.

But the botanist and the nurseryman hardly deserve to be blamed for having displayed so little artistic sense. That should never have been expected of them, for their object has not been to produce a charming picture so much as a fine growth. On the other hand, the cultivated employer will have in view the attainment of effects that will tempt the painter with all the qualities of form, colour, and composition; and if he sets to work wisely the botanist cannot but be his most welcome assistant.

That these were the lines on which the old designers worked there can be no reasonable doubt. The *tout ensemble*, as it would appeal to the architectural sense, was uppermost—botany and arboriculture were its handmaidens. To many people this may sound rather overdrawn, because so many old places that we know derive their charm from accidental effects. But if the place is of a respectable age, and we enquire into the matter a little more closely, we shall probably find that a very definite scheme once ruled the whole, a scheme that time and neglect have almost obliterated.

To quote a simple instance, there is an old place on the borders of Twickenham, called Marble Hill, possibly well known to frequenters of the Thames. Once the property of the Peel family, it is now fated to become building sites if a private



A WOODLAND WALK.

purchaser fails to come forward. The gardens and groves are a very tangle, as the house has stood untenanted since the stable clock stopped one morning at half-past nine fourteen years ago. The house is a solid Georgian block, with crescent walls to the forecourt. On the river front is an arrangement of groves and gardens so overgrown as to be only traceable with difficulty, but full of broad effects for the brush of the painter. The accompanying plan shows the main features of the lay-out, which, though very late in date, is good and compact and simple. Scattered over England there are many such places passed over by the hand of the landscapist, but every year growing more obscure, until the tall timber comes down and the scheme of the designer is lost for ever.

F. INIGO THOMAS.

(To be continued.)

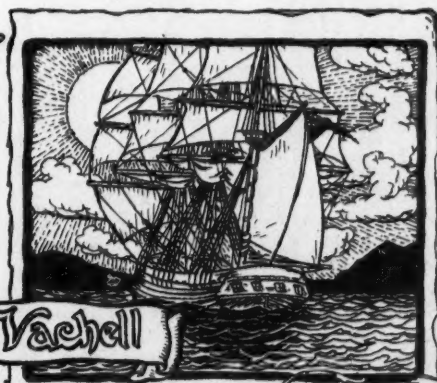
## John Charity

A Romance of Yesterday

Containing certain adventures and love passages in Alta California of John Charity, yeoman of Cranberry-Orcas in the County of Hampshire, England as set down by himself.

Edited by

Horace Amesley Vachell



### CHAPTER VIII.

SAN FRANCISCO SOLANO.

FATHER QUIJAS and I, with two vaqueros in charge of the horses, left the plaza of Monterey as the sun tipped with madder the peaks of the Gabilan Range. We galloped ahead, while the vaqueros followed, one of them leading the bell-mare, whom the other horses *always* kept in sight. Quijas told me that in this fashion distance was discounted. Nothing so tires a rider as a weary mount. When a horse flagged (we rode at a hand gallop) a vaquero caught and saddled a fresh one, and the jaded beast joined the *caballada* behind. We had five-and-twenty mounts in our string.

My baggage—a change of clothes and other articles—was packed in a *maleta*, an oblong sack, with the opening in the middle, that was fastened securely with raw hide to the crupper of my big saddle. We carried no food, counting upon the hospitality of the missions and ranchos *en route*, and although the fare set before us was often of the plainest and coarsest, yet it never lacked the sauce of a hearty welcome.

Through what a smiling landscape we passed! Abundant rains had spread a mantle of tender green upon the hills, and the valleys were lush with grasses—alfileria, clover, and malva. I never had seen so many wild flowers, not even in the water meadows that skirt the Itchen when the daffodils and cowslips are in bloom. We came upon acres of golden poppies, what they now call *eschscholtzias*, and Quijas told me that later the same ground would blaze with larkspur and yellow violets. As we rode on the country grew more beautiful, more thickly wooded with both live and white oaks. It reminded me of the park at Cranberry-Orcas. Here stood the same ancient trees, some of them slightly warped from the perpendicular, leaning toward the south, bent—so I learned from Quijas—beneath the kiss of the strong trade wind; here were gently rolling hills, round as the breasts of a woman; here, too, were fairy glades, beloved by the black-tail deer; rabbits and hares scampered away to our right and left; bevvies of quail whirled up from beneath our horses' hoofs; doves cooed from the branches of the pines. Presently we skirted a vast marsh, and far out in the pools of

water I could see flocks of ducks, widgeon, mallard, and teal, with here and there long lines of white and grey geese, and more than one wild swan, whose dazzling plumage can never be mistaken. Quijas showed me fresh bear tracks in the dust of the road—tracks like a giant's foot—the spoor of the grizzly *Ursus horribilis*. He promised me that I should see one of these monsters lassoed, or, if I pleased, stake my skill with a rifle against his strength. 'Twas a sportsman's paradise!

I believe that no Englishman has a greater love of England than I—'tis the heritage of every yeoman; but on this spring morning I confessed to the burly friar that not even my dear Hampshire could be compared with this sweet, virginal California. For she lay before me in all her glowing beauty, fresh from the hand of God, untouched as yet by man, immaculate. And then I began to dimly understand the feelings of Alvarado, that cool, slow-speaking Spaniard, who could see, as in a nightmare, this precious gem slipping from his grasp. What wonder that the sweat bedewed his brow!

The good padre had a very perfect gift of silence. Perhaps he was reflecting that this pearl of price had been filched from the bosom of his church, and that the sweet music of the mission bells was now jangled and out of tune. I have since learned that the fat acres that lay round the missions were deeded to the padres on trust, so to speak, and not as a permanent possession. Later Alvarado explained the matter to me; but the priests, who had laboured faithfully and well, evolving order out of chaos, thought otherwise.

Upon this first day Quijas was in the mood to try my mettle as a horseman, and we rode a hundred miles. The missions in Alta California are about fifty miles apart, and were used as stopping-places. Those travelling leisurely rode fifty miles a day, those in a hurry a hundred. I had ridden regularly since we dropped anchor in Monterey Bay, but I confess that I was sore and tired when we drew rein at the San José Mission. Here the number of buildings, corrals, and the like amazed me. Quijas pronounced it to be the most prosperous of the Californian missions, on account of the superb soil of the Santa Clara Valley, now famous all over the civilised world.

"The Church," said he, as I expressed my admiration of what had been accomplished, "is the greatest organisation in the world, and she has shown even in California what she can do. Now," and he smiled sarcastically, "it is the turn of the State. We will see how quickly she can cut our stitches."

"Those in charge," I replied, warmly, "will be sure to guard such valuable properties."

"*Quis custodiet custodes?*" he answered, smiling; and I murmured the name of Alvarado. Quijas nodded, admitting curtly that His Excellency was a man of executive ability, alone upon the poop of a galleon. 'Twas plain the good father had no faith in the ship, though he commended the pilot.

Next day we climbed into our saddles and took the old north road that skirts the bay of San Francisco. Our tongues wagged freely, and the friar told many stories. In return, I said that I was the bearer of a message from Magdalena to Vallejo, and bespoke a confessor's influence with the comandante. He eyed me sharply, and grinned when I said that Magdalena would sooner enter a convent than marry the Mexican.

"My son," said he, still grinning, "how didst thou obtain the confidence of this maiden?"

"How did I obtain the confidence of Alvarado, my father?"

"A countertime," he exclaimed, with his jolly laugh.

"Well, my son, thou hast good credentials writ plain upon thy face. See to it that the devil does not erase God's character. And be not too friendly with that little witch. She in a convent! *Madre de Dios!*" And he laughed again, louder than ever.

"Will Vallejo interfere?" I asked.

"Perhaps," he replied, evasively; "but, my son, be not too zealous on the maid's behalf. Plead her cause coolly. Perhaps thou would'st do well to leave the matter to me."

"Gladly," said I, and I gave him Magdalena's ring.

"On one condition," he spoke emphatically, and dropped the familiar "thou." "You must pass me your word as a gentleman, señor, never to abuse the trust this innocent child has reposed in you."

"Father Quijas," said I, "you go too far."

"Tut, tut! Better too far than not far enough. I know what flesh and blood is, my son. Well, well, you understand what I mean. I'm her friend and yours, but I'd kill you with these hands if you wronged Magdalena Estrada."

"Amen," said I, and we rode on in silence.

We reached the mission of San Francisco Solano at mid-day upon the first of March, Ash Wednesday that year falling on the seventh. The comandante was walking up and down the plaza as we rode up, and he greeted Quijas with a shout of welcome, and me with Spanish courtesy. He looked a younger man than his nephew Alvarado, although just three years older—for he was born in 1806. His bodily presence and bearing were most distinguished. He wore no moustache upon a finely-cut upper lip, but the cheeks were fringed with side whiskers, black

and curly as his hair. The forehead was broad and high, the chin rounded and dimpled, the eyes less keen than Alvarado's, but crowned with arching brows. He was, in fine, the typical *hidalgo* of high degree, a trifle pompous for so young a man, but a charming talker, full of anecdote, and well-informed upon many subjects. Like the de la Guerras of Santa Barbara and the Bandinis of San Diego, he counted amongst his peons many mechanics trained by the padres—carpenters, weavers, blacksmiths, and the like. No patriarch of ancient history possessed such flocks and herds. He owned at least 40,000 head of neat cattle, 5,000 mares, 2,000 colts, sheep innumerable, and other animals. Lieutenant Revere, of the United States Navy, who visited Vallejo in 1846, says "he had 800 trained vaquero horses on his ranches, of which thirty-five were picked *caballos de su silla*—his own private saddle horses—splendid animals, which a sultan would be proud to bestride."

I presented my letter on arrival; but the comandante said not a word concerning my mission till I had dined and refreshed myself with a long siesta. Doña Francisca Vallejo showed me my room, and after the vermin-infested places I had slept in during my journey, you may be sure that I looked with delight upon a comfortable bed, whose linen was white as the snow of Shasta.

"The Saints give you pleasant dreams," said my hostess, glancing at the highly-coloured engravings that adorned the wall—portraits of St. John, St. Joseph, and the Blessed Virgin. "*Hasta Luego, señor.*"

My host was awaiting me as I stepped into the patio, and led me to his private room, where he offered me cigars and cigaritos. He looked at me attentively as I sat before him, and I returned his glance with interest. He wore the picturesque costume of the country—the short jacket, exquisitely embroidered, the *calzoneras*, open at the sides and displaying the finest and whitest linen, and a scarlet silk sash. The dress became him so vastly well that I ventured a compliment.

"You will do me a favour, señor," said he, "if you will accept at my hands a similar suit. We are something of a size, and the ladies will be gratified, aye, tickled to death, to see an Englishman in the trappings of a Spaniard. Nay, do not refuse. *Hola! Inocente!*"

He clapped his hands like a pacha, and a *mestizo*, or half-breed, came running.

"Take a complete suit, the dark blue one, and the *manga* that goes with it, to the room of the señor caballero. See to it that the *botas* and the linen are new."

Then he turned to me, and said, courteously:

"Now, señor, I am at your service. My nephew, it seems, counts you his friend, and his friends are my friends, although," and he smiled pleasantly, "some of his enemies are my friends also. I wrote to him, as you know, that I was tired of these stupid quarrels, that I was no politician, but a *ranchero*, and he has sent you, it seems, to argue the matter."

"He sent me, Señor Comandante, because His Excellency knows that letters often miscarry."

"And messengers, too, are lost. The Indians are a perfect pest. Well, I thank you for coming, and him for sending so accomplished a caballero."

Then I told him briefly that Estudillo had sent an armed force to occupy Los Angeles; that José Castro would march south immediately, and that Alvarado would follow. I added that Juan Castañeda was now at San Buenaventura, and was expected to attack Santa Barbara. Vallejo smoked quietly, and made no comments.

"His Excellency," said I, in conclusion, "has no choice in the matter; he must *fight*."

"You Englishmen talk of fighting as if it were a *merienda*. You will accompany my nephew—no?"

"I hope to have that honour and pleasure."

"I shall stay here," said Vallejo, gravely, "and do my duty. The Indians are keeping me busy, and I have hundreds of lives and valuable property to protect. This campaign, señor, will prove a farce, and I do not choose to play the part of a comedian. My nephew will please himself, as he always does. I shall take the same privilege."

I bowed; there seemed nothing more to be said. Vallejo was a diplomatist; but he spoke truth when he linked duty with pleasure, and in my heart I hardly blamed him for holding aloof from these family squabbles. Perhaps he had an exaggerated sense of his own importance—perhaps he had other plans—for he asked me in a pointed manner if I had had talk with Larkin, and, on my replying in the negative, raised his brows.

"Don Tomas," he observed, carelessly, with his eyes upon the smoke from his cigar, "has a future before him. Make him your friend."

"If the United States—"

"We will not discuss that, señor, if you please."

I spoke of Soto, and Vallejo pronounced that accomplished cavalier a time-server. "But," he concluded, "such men can be used. Any stick will do to stir mud with."



I missed the point. Later, I knew that he alluded to the process of adobe-making, the bricks of which houses are built. And I knew also, in after years, that the houses built by Alvarado and this man crumbled into dust and corruption, because of the "sticks" who had stirred the mud—the sorry workmen so unworthy of their masters.

"And now," said my host, rising, "let me show you Lacrymæ Montis, my beautiful spring of water. I shall build there some day."

"The name," said I, "is pretty, but not of good omen. This is the land of laughter."

"We cannot banish the tears," said Vallejo; "but we will laugh, señor, while we can."

We passed a room where I caught a glimpse of Doña Francisca superintending the labours of her needlewomen. Vast piles of linen lay upon the floor. Some of the girls were making lace, others hemmed sheets and napkins; all were gay as larks, and chattered like blue jays. From the kitchens came savoury odours and more laughter; from an arbour of Castilian roses the pathetic music of a guitar.

"There are tears in that," said I.

"Yes, señor, our music is sad, and our songs still sadder. Ay, but that boy plays well. If I could send him to Europe he would astonish his professors. I found him running barefoot at the mission of San Juan Bautista, and clapped my ear-mark on him."

"You have the best of everything, señor."

"That is my ambition."

We sauntered past the huts of the Indians, and quickened our steps at the sound of a tumult of voices.

"Tis that cursed German Jew, Solomon," said Vallejo, angrily. "I turned the impudent rogue from my door not an hour ago."

We skirted the wall of the rancheria, and came suddenly upon a picturesque group of Indians, mestizos, vaqueros, and half a score of women. The Indians wore a sort of camisole, but the others were gay in primary colours—reds, whites, blues, and yellows. The women carried rebozos, and each vaquero sported a serape, gaudy with tarnished gold and silver galloon. In the centre stood a stout fellow as big as I am; but a true and unmistakable son of Israel, one of the pioneers of his ubiquitous race in Alta California. When he saw the comandante he cringed, and laid a long forefinger against his large nose.

"Did I not tell you to begone?" said Vallejo, harshly.

The Jew pointed to his wares, a collection of cheap finery, not more than a small mule could carry.

Solomon looked at me. The sight of a European seemed to encourage him, for he said in broken English to me:

"Der poor Jew don't make no friendts novheres."

Vallejo understood him, for he spoke English, although imperfectly. A silence fell on the rest of the company.

"Der poor Jew must live. It wasn't no use my going away till I do my peesness mit dese peoples."

He looked so fat and good-natured that I burst out laughing.

"He pretends that he does not understand my Spanish, señor, but he can chatter glibly enough with you. Tell him that I keep a *cuerda* for such dogs as he."

I was astonished at this harshness. Poor Solomon fixed his bright eyes upon mine, cringing and quivering at the word "*cuerda*." He had tasted raw-hide before.

"The *cuerda*!" he muttered. "Oh, my gracious!"

He began to pack his bundles, sighing and muttering to himself in Hebrew. A tear started down his long nose and fell with a splash upon a piece of silk. It was plain that our untimely presence had wrecked a fine market.

"I wish I vhas in Englandt," he said piteously to me. "I risk mine life mit der Indians to get here. Dem goods is halluf sold," and he choked with emotion.

"You are a Jew," said Vallejo, coldly; "you must go."

"Yes, I am a Jew," retorted Solomon; "schoost the same as your Christ."

"You blaspheming dog——"

"Señor," said I, "this man is a Jew, but he has addressed me in my own tongue. And he has risked, as he says, his life to get here. Let him sell his goods this time, and I'll answer for it that he returns no more to Sonoma. You will not return, Solomon?"

"Mein Gott—no!"

"Of course," said Vallejo, bowing, "if you wish to befriend him, señor, that is another matter entirely."

Then he took my arm and led me aside, but not before I had seen the bright eyes of Solomon suffused with gratitude. Before we had walked a score of yards I could hear his voice loudly extolling the quality of his rebozos; and a roar of laughter broke from the crowd.

"Thank God," said my host to me, "we have but few Jews in California, but they stick to us like limpets. You thought me cruel, señor. Ay! you have an expressive face. But I know that man. They are barnacles—these hook-nosed, cringing pedlars. Why it is, I know not, but the sight of a Jew makes me shiver!"

Now, reading the past by the light of the present, it is no

wonder to me that the Don shivered, for the Jew in California has been the curse of curses to him and his. As he said, the barnacles that prey upon the stout timbers of the finest ships, insidiously destroying them, may justly be compared with God's most peculiar people. The Shylocks of the lotus-land had more than their pound of Spanish flesh. They drifted in with the human tide then steadily setting westward; they taught their customers to borrow; they took their gold in exchange for dross, and loaned it back at exorbitant rates of interest—at sixty, seventy, aye, and a hundred per cent. They were turned from the front doors, but they slipped in at the back. They smarted often beneath the *cuerda* of the wealthy ranchero. They suffered a thousand indignities and hardships.

But that was yesterday.

To-day you may see the descendants of the haughtiest families in Alta California peddling tamales along Van Ness Avenue—the Juden Strasse of San Francisco.

(To be continued.)



IRIS ALATA.

THIS pretty winter-flowering Iris is in bloom now in sheltered rock gardens and warm light borders. Its flowers appeal to one strongly at this time, when the Snowdrop is just opening its pearly bells and the Croci are shooting up through the brown earth. But this Algerian Iris, dainty in colour and form, braves weather that the Snowdrop cares little for, and its delicacy of tint is not lost at this season when the bulb is planted in some sunny corner, near to mossy stones to bring up the shades of lilac. There is some variation in the colour, some forms being not only deeper in colour but larger, and the white variety alba is as delicate as the purest Snowdrop. It is wise to plant the bulbs in a cushion of Stonecrop or Rockfoil (Saxifrage), to prevent heavy rains splashing up the soil and destroying the purity of the flower colouring. When the weather is very unkind it is advisable to put a handlight over the Iris groups. One may readily know the plant by the Leek-like arrangement of its greyish leaves. In this respect it is remarkably distinct.

THE STRAWBERRY TREE (BENTHAMIA FRAGIFERA).

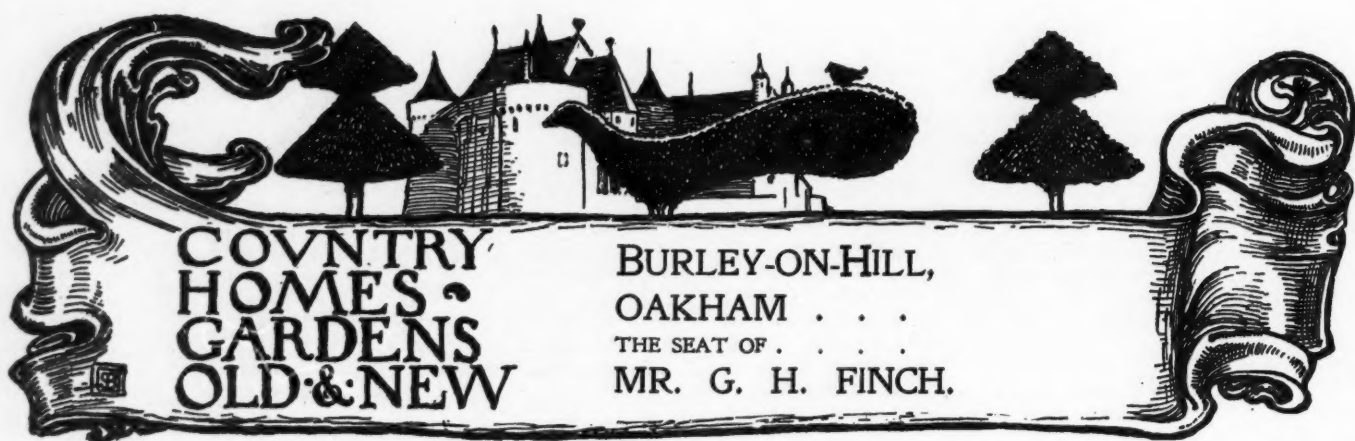
We received, a few days ago, a boxful of leaves and fruit of this beautiful tree. Unfortunately it is too tender for Midland and Northern gardens, but in the Channel Islands and the South of England and Ireland it grows into quite a tree. At Helston in Cornwall there are many noble specimens of it, which are beautiful when covered with flowers in spring and the curious spongy fruits in autumn and winter. The fruit is said to make a good preserve, but when freshly picked from the tree it is as unpalatable as an Orange stuffed with sawdust. At one time birds seemed to regard the fruit with suspicion, but unfortunately they have acquired a taste for it. In hard winters the tree is quickly stripped of its burden. As a tree for a warm climate it deserves note. The fruits received came from Fota Island, Cork, and we mention this to show the climate the tree requires.

PRUNUS DAVIDIANA.

During the spring months the majority of the charming flowering trees that give life and colour to the garden belong to the Rose order, conspicuous among the earliest being the Peaches and Almonds, of which the first, P. Davidiana, is now in flower. It is of rather upright growth, and the pretty pink blossoms which are borne on the shoots of the preceding year are about 1 in. in diameter. There is a variety—alba—in which the flowers are white, besides which, as a rule, it is freer than the pink form. At one time the Almond was known by the generic name of Amygdalus; the Peach, Persica; the Cherry, Cerasus; and the Plum, Prunus; but now they are all included in this last-named genus. Where the old system of nomenclature is still retained, P. Davidiana is known as Amygdalus Davidiana.

IMPROVED SEED BREEDING.

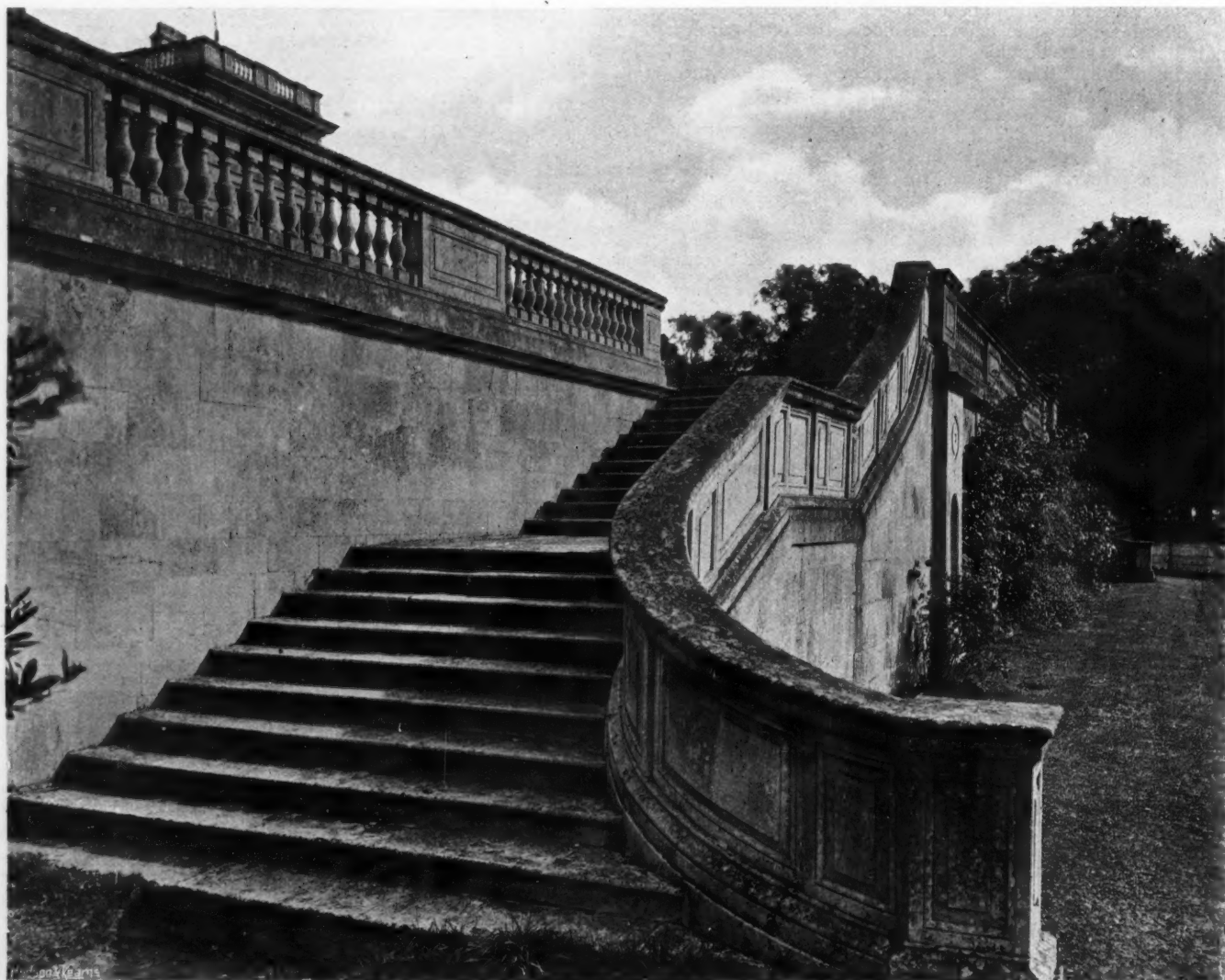
Messrs. Gartons, Limited, Warrington, have issued their seed catalogue for 1900. After a prefatory note addressed to prospective customers, setting forth matters of general interest connected with the business, an interesting account is given of the "Garton System of Plant Breeding," by which the Brothers Garton have produced through multiple cross-fertilisation many new varieties of nearly every species of crop plants. Four interesting figures illustrate pictorially some of the most unique results which have been obtained by cross-breeding. The qualities of the new and improved breeds and their pedigrees are given in detail, and many highly appreciative references to the scientific interest and practical value of the work from the leading agricultural papers have been introduced, together with reports from experimental stations and from farmers who have grown the new varieties as field crops. Quotations are given from the expressed opinions of leading scientific authorities on agriculture and botany, among whom may be mentioned Professor Somerville, Cambridge; Professor Wallace, Edinburgh; Professor Gilchrist, Reading; and Professor McAlpine, Glasgow. Each and all speak in the highest terms of the scientific work which the Gartons have accomplished and of the enormous practical value of its results to British agriculturists. Most important changes have been introduced and developments made for this the second year of the business as a commercial enterprise: Seeds—new, improved, or specially selected and guaranteed—are offered in every section; the most modern machinery is employed for cleaning the different kinds of seeds; and the staff has been augmented and reorganised. The management has been strengthened by the addition of Mr. G. P. Miln, who for a period of some twenty odd years has had exceptional experience of the seed trade, and has devoted special attention to the study of the life history of agricultural plants, and more especially of pasture grasses. The prices quoted generally are reasonable, and farmers will find it possible, at a very moderate outlay, to secure the full benefits to be derived from growing the new breeds, say, of the cereal crops, if they will adopt the system of treating the limited amounts they purchase as "stock" seed from which to grow a good supply for their own use the second year.



THIS great and stately mansion is intimately associated with many notable historical persons, and, from the point of view of its garden, it is particularly interesting, because the character of its surroundings was completely changed by the celebrated Humphry Repton. Although Repton was a man of discernment, and was possessed with a great love for the beauties of Nature, there are few people who will not regret that he laid his hand upon the series of terraces which before his time graced the house of Burley. The situation of the mansion is strikingly beautiful, for the stately pile is at the edge of what may be described as a table-land, and commands, on the south, a magnificent prospect of wood, water, and distant country. From this side the house may be discerned from a very great distance, and is often noticed by travellers on the line between Manton and Oakham. Though Rutland is the smallest county in England, it possesses many natural beauties, and various picturesque attractions.

Burley has had many owners in the course of its history. In Elizabeth's days it belonged to Sir John Harrington, after-

wards Lord Harrington, who, in the latter years of the reign of James I., sold it to the famous favourite, George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, "that life of pleasure and that soul of whim." The house was at the time of considerable extent, but it was further enlarged and beautified by Buckingham. During the Civil War, Burley was garrisoned for the Parliament, and it is gratifying to find that strict orders were issued, as appears from Parliamentary papers, that the soldiers should not "spoyle the house or furniture." Unfortunately, the behest was not regarded, for when the Royalists were approaching the garrison set fire to the place, presumably with the purpose of cheating the cavaliers of a possible success. An old chronicler says that the stables escaped the "malice of the destroyers," and a manuscript, which is in existence, tells us that the mansion house "was in these late wars utterly consumed by fire, so that there remains at present nothing but certaine ruinous parts and pieces of the walls." The prudent Buckingham had married a daughter of the great Lord Fairfax, through whose influence he was able to recover a portion of his large estates before the Restoration. Nothing,







"COUNTRY LIFE."

GARDENS OLD AND NEW.—BURLEY-ON-THE-HILL: LOWER TERRACE GARDEN.



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THE NORTH FRONT.

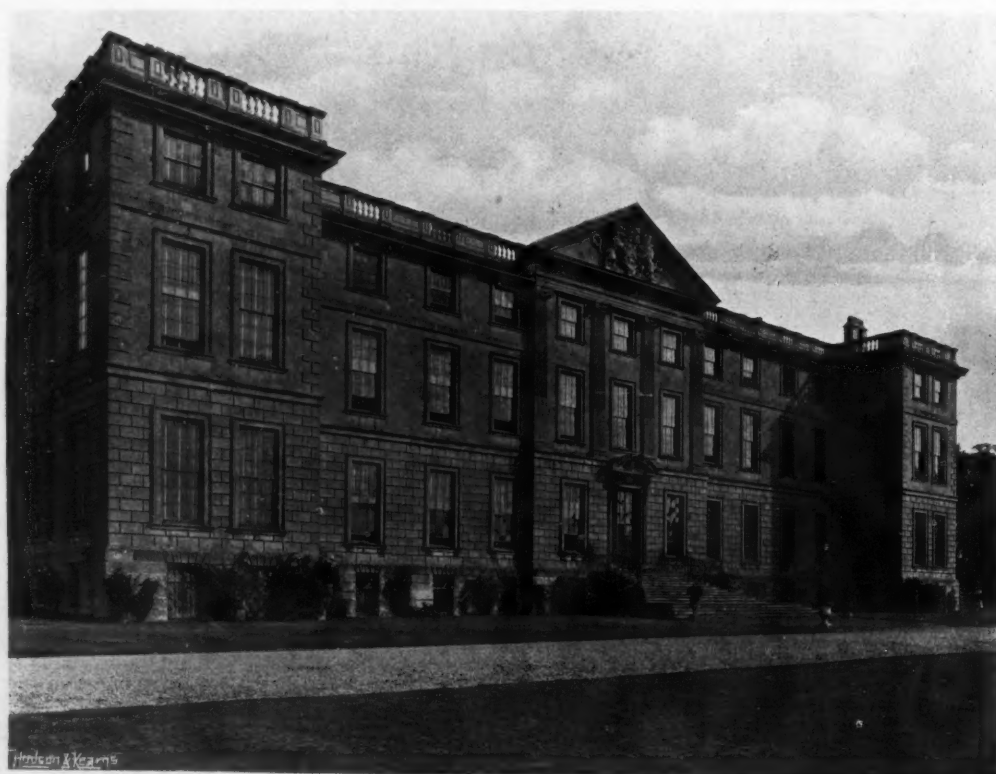
"COUNTRY LIFE"

however, remained long in the hands of the profligate favourite, and before he retired to oblivion in Yorkshire, his reckless extravagance had caused him to sell most of his property, Burley being purchased by Daniel Finch, second Earl of Nottingham, Secretary of State to William III. It will be remembered that Nottingham was largely instrumental in confirming the loyalty of the fleet, which made possible the great victory of La Hogue, and that he afterwards bitterly quarrelled with Russell, who had been in command. The deeds relating to the sale are still at Burley, and bear the signatures of Buckingham and the Finches. It appears that at the time the old house

occupied the site of that which Nottingham built, and which still stands almost as he left it, and the cellars of Buckingham's mansion are still used. One of his three terraces is also in existence, but otherwise the garden have been wholly changed since his time.

Nottingham's mansion is a very stately pile, approached through the park on the north side, where the great flanking colonnades, with their unusual curves, have a certain distant resemblance to those more famous ones in the Piazza of St. Peter's at Rome. Nottingham had travelled through Europe, and had brought with him a classic taste, which found expression in his new structure. It will give some idea of the extent of it if we say that the breadth of the front from one colonnade to the other is 500ft. There was formerly, at the lower end of the court thus formed, a wall, with two porters' lodges, one on each side of the iron gates, but these were unfortunately removed upon the advice of Repton, who had imbibed his ideas from "Capability Brown," the destroyer of so much. It is even said that Repton contemplated at one time the iniquity of removing the splendid gates, but that he was not allowed to exercise his discretion in that matter. The gates are extremely fine, and admirable instances of iron-work, and Burley is, indeed, one of the places in this country where we see the art of the smith at its best.

The pictures will explain sufficiently well the noble character of the mansion itself. Within, it is adorned by many excellent pictures, many of them being portraits of great interest, numbering among them an excellent presentment of the second Lord Nottingham, the great builder. The tapestries in the large hall were woven at



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THE SOUTH FACADE.

"COUNTRY LIFE"



the famous factory at Mortlake, and represent the history of Hero and Leander. In other rooms are tapestry reproductions of the cartoons of Raphael, and much charming Dutch or Belgian tapestry. The fine painted hall has its walls and ceiling decorated by the hand of Landscroon, a pupil of the famous Verrio, the subjects being the triumphs of Julius Cæsar. Landscroon also painted the ceiling of the great oak staircase which we illustrate. The curious taste of the time manifested itself in these adornments, confounding, as it were, the art of the builder with that of the painter. To many people the wall and ceiling paintings of Hampton Court are familiar, and it will be remembered how Pope satirised the fashion—

"On painted ceiling you devoutly stare  
Where sprawl the saints of Verrio and  
Laguerre."

From what has been said in regard to the situation of the house, it will readily be imagined that delightful views are obtained from the windows on the south side, below which lie the gardens, the park, and the woods, with fields beyond, and in the far distance the umbrageous hills of Northamptonshire, while on the east the prospect is of far-off Lincolnshire, and on the west of the pastoral districts of Leicestershire.

But it is now time for us to enter the garden. The great terrace on the south side is 270yds. in length, and is the only one remaining of the five original terrace, of which three were formed by the Duke of Buckingham and two added by Lord Nottingham. The disposition of the grand terrace is, indeed, very imposing, and the richness and excellence of the classical detail in the stairways, the panelled masonry, and the balustrades are notable. The house itself and the terraces are, in fact, very fine examples of

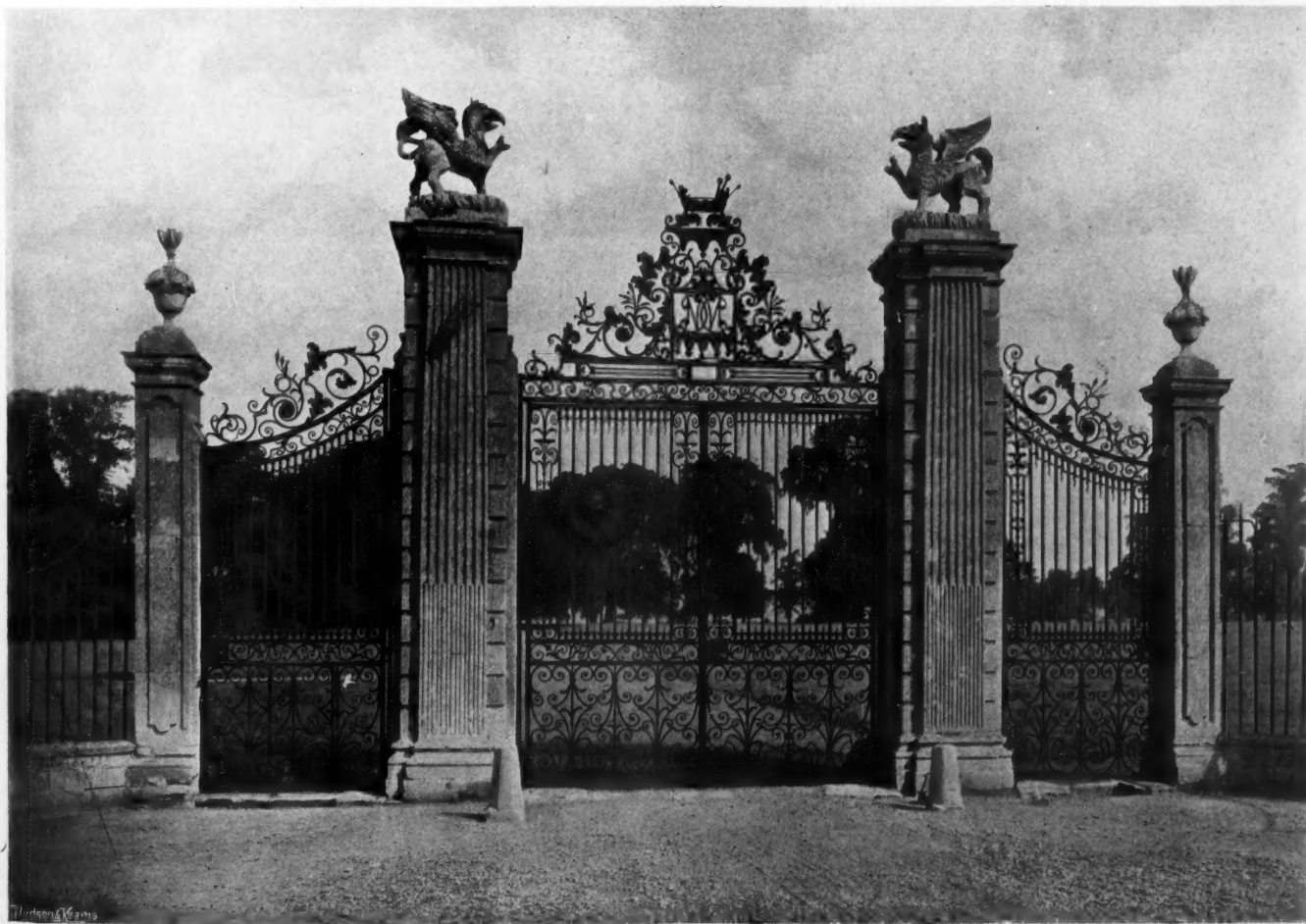


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THE SOUTH LAWN.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

the builder's art. It appeared, however, to Repton that the terraces were not sufficiently imposing. He saw that on the south side the landscape was the principal feature with which he had to deal, but the steep descent had been cut into five terraces, each of which was supported by a red brick wall. The "improver" would have been more content if stone had been used, but he sighed after the hanging gardens of France and Italy, which he thought would have added more magnificence than his own art could suggest. As the terraces stood they seemed to him to be deficient in height and out of harmony in colour. To do him justice, he admits that it would not have been wise to remove the whole of the terraces "in a manner too often practised by modern improvers." He, therefore, decided to effect a compromise



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THE PARK GATES.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

between art and "modern gardening," between art and Nature, and, by increasing the height of the uppermost terrace, and causing it to rise from the lower level of the ground, he made what he called "the line of demarcation between the dressed ground and the park." He adds the sensible remark that it would have been happy "for the magnificence of English scenery if many such stately terraces near a palace had thus been preserved." We can only regret that Repton's zeal extended no further, and that he took pleasure in sweeping away four terraces out of five. It is quite possible that the old terraces were not in perfect keeping with the stately mansion, but it would have been infinitely better that they should remain than that the character of the south front of Burley should have been marred by a "modern improver." The effect of the change introduced by Repton was to sweep away the old pleasance of the time of William and Anne, with its pleached alleys and secluded bowers, and to lay open a landscape garden with winding paths, and lakes and trees dotted about in various parts—excellent, indeed, in themselves, but not appropriate to the house of Burley.

Repton considered it a folly to have terraces in tiers, and he was not well pleased with the avenues, which had existed in Buckingham's time, for he speaks of such features as "trees planted in meaningless rows." Fortunately, however, for Burley, the avenues still remain. As to the garden itself below the terrace wall, it is only necessary to say that one level is devoted to pure flower gardening, and another, which represents one of the old terraces, to fruit trees and herbaceous plants. In the spring this garden presents a very pretty sight, for all around are elder trees in full blossom, while further in the wood are wild cherry trees and masses of wild hyacinths, making a wonderful carpet of blue. The kitchen garden is very picturesque, and possesses a curious red brick wall built upon a sinuous plan.

It remains only to speak of the north front of Burley, where the colonnades are. It is very interesting to learn the ideas that it inspired in Repton. The spacious court, he said, had frequently been quoted as a wonderful effect of art, and when the distant country was excluded by a wall, by the village, and by trees beyond, the character of the area was most striking, but the moment one side of the quadrangle was opened to the adjoining country "it shrank from comparison." Some doubt evidently assailed him. After removing the wall, which formed the front of this enclosed court, he questioned whether the gate and the porters' lodges should or should not remain. He thought he might have fallen into some error, led by the prevailing fashion of opening lawns, and he adds that there is a point at which every object assumes its greatest magnitude. Evidently he recognised that it would have been preferable to retain the whole of the north front as a work of art, for he says, if possible,



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THE COLONNADE. "COUNTRY LIFE."



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THE PAINTED STAIRCASE. "COUNTRY LIFE."

he would have excluded all view of the country. These are singular opinions to be expressed by Repton, but they show that he felt a certain incongruity in his proceedings.

It is unnecessary to describe further this extremely interesting place. Enough has been said to show its magnificence, and to make it clear, however much has been swept away, that a great deal still remains. The great terrace and the noble avenues of ancient trees are excellent accompaniment of the stately and interesting abode.

## BOOKS OF THE DAY.

A REAL friend, for whose taste in matters literary I entertain great respect, "does not much like" "The Realist," which is a modern romance by Herbert Flowerdew (John Lane); nor, perhaps, do I, but it has freshness and originality and power notwithstanding. It is not at all a pretty story, it is wildly improbable, but it grasps the attention firmly, one grows interested in the characters, and as a piece of craftsmanship the work is remarkably well done. Denton is a young journalist on the staff of the *Gardenia*, a struggling weekly paper, who is sent to interview Auguste Zant, a French realist, at his secluded house at Westeringham. Zant is a person who has a reputation for complete want of scruple in causing in others the emotions and the sufferings which he desires to describe. On entering, Denton finds a beautiful girl, Mary, engaged at a type-writing machine, with whom he falls in love at first sight. Mary types the message, "Do not let him take you near the snakes." Zant and Denton have their interview. Zant does take Denton to the snake-room, and upsets a case; a snake bites him, a harmless snake really, but he thinks he is to die in half-an-hour, and he is left by himself, but under the observation of Zant really, in a room with the type-writer, which plays rather a large part in the story. Zant, in fact, wishes to study a young man of ardent temperament face to face with death, and Denton's agony of mind is well described. Denton is engaged in typing his "last dying speech," so to speak, to Mary, when Vandaji, Zant's Hindoo servant, enters with a note, explaining that he has been hoaxed, and enclosing a cheque for £50. Denton, infuriated, seizes the paper from the type-writer, tears up the cheque, and returns to London to find the *Gardenia* perished and himself left with 10s. in the world, and to have visions of rescuing the peerless Mary. He tries to dispose of the interview with Zant, which would certainly have had some value elsewhere, but Zant disclaims it, and he is treated as an impostor. Then Zant invites Denton to come to live with him at Westeringham as his collaborator, and Denton, for the sake of his love of Mary and in spite of her warnings, consents, the consent being all the more willing in that Zant has announced his intention of going to Paris for a week, in the course of which Denton hopes to be able to effect Mary's escape. Zant goes, Vandaji with him, Mary and Denton are left alone; mystery begins at once, for Mary produces from her bosom an exact copy of the letter which Denton had typed to her when he thought he was dying and had destroyed later. Clearly the two children, for they are little more, are in the hands of a villain of diabolical ingenuity, and they naturally declare their love on the spot. Denton retires to his room, a most luxurious chamber, where there is another type-writer exactly like Mary's. Having mechanical aptitude, he observes that the type-writer has a base as big as itself. He takes it to pieces, and finds that, by an ingenious arrangement, every word typed on the slip above is repeated on a slip concealed below. The mystery of the copy of his original letter to Mary is solved, but in a most unpleasant manner, for inside this second machine he finds a confidential letter from Zant to Destin, a French poet, which states that Mary and Zant are engaged in playing a trick on a foolish young Englishman. He believes it all,



yet he is assailed by doubts; and there follows a very clever description of his state of mind—in fact, this book consists in large part of a series of descriptions of states of mind.

"George closed the door and turned back to pace the floor in an agony of indecision. If he could find some means of convincing his heart as well as his reason. Unless he did so this doubt would haunt him for ever, slight as it was. He would for ever be saying to himself: 'What if she really loved me? What if I left her when she needed me? What if Zant lied to his friend?'"

"No, he could not go away while the shred of a doubt remained; he could not go away until Mary herself—he had realised that this was the only proof which would absolutely satisfy his heart—until Mary herself had admitted her falseness. Yet how could he make her admit it; how could he protect himself against the persuasiveness which she would bring to bear upon him? The scene in the garden was a sufficient warning to him of what the result would be if he confronted her with the letter. It would be useless to do so, for even if the letter libelled her, she had no means of proving the fact save by assertion, and the whole question was whether her assertions were to be believed. His mind worked hopelessly round the circle, and dizzied itself; and he was still pacing the floor in a tumult of indecision when his steps were arrested by the sound of a slight tap on his door.

"His heart beat quickly. A dozen wild conjectures crowded into his brain to leave his body motionless for want of direction. That it was Mary who stood at the other side of the locked door he had not a moment's doubt. The light beneath it had shown her, no doubt, that he had not yet retired. She had heard him pacing the floor, perhaps—perhaps suspected that in some way he had found her out, and before he was prepared to meet her she had come to weave round him once more the web of her enchantment. She would see the marks of tears on his face. It would be impossible to hide from her the fact of his discovery. He shrank from meeting her. And while he shrank, terrified at the thought of her fascination, his heart was eager for the meeting. Surely, with his eyes opened, he would be able to detect the paint and tinsel that he had taken for flesh tint and gold—if she were really acting. The doubt intruded itself in spite of reason.

"The knock came again. Yes, he would see her and settle his doubt for ever. Crossing the floor, he threw open the door, and started back, for on the threshold, tall and motionless in the light that glowed from his room, stood Vandaji, the Hindoo."

Vandaji—the cunning Zant has warned Denton in advance that Vandaji was corruptible—has come to be bribed to make, as the bogus letter had made, false revelations to the duped boy, and there follows an endless series of cruel hoaxes of Denton, who is a chivalrous lad all through, of misunderstandings between him and Mary, a most lovable creature, but in an agony of apprehension for Denton all the time. Suddenly, in fact at the moment when Vandaji reveals the already discovered secret of the type-writer, the whole scheme of deception flashes upon Denton; he arranges to depart with Mary; Zant appears; and after a good many things which there is no time to recount here, Denton shoots at Zant with a revolver in which Vandaji has substituted blank cartridge for ball. Zant falls; Denton thinks he has murdered him; there is an affecting scene between Mary and Denton; Vandaji stuns Denton; and finally Zant reveals the whole imposition, and sends the pair off to live happily with £200—hardly enough, I think—by way of solatium and dowry to Mary. That is the end of one of the oddest stories which has ever come in my way, in a word, of a psychological novel of diabolical ingenuity and of wonderful and even excessive elaboration, admirable as a piece of workmanship, but not entirely pleasing notwithstanding.

Some little time ago, spurred by a review in a favoured journal, I alluded in a literary note to Mr. Josiah Conder's "Floral Art in Japan," which I have acquired since by purchase, simply because there seemed to be no other way of getting it. Even the natural resentment of a reviewer compelled to take so unprecedented a step does not blind my sense of justice sufficiently to prevent me from saying that, as a picture-book alone, it is worth every penny of the

45s. which it costs. The fourteen coloured plates, the work of Japanese artists of the popular school, are very beautiful, and the Shiuei Sha, whatever that may mean, who reproduced them are clearly past-masters in the art of colour-printing. Indeed, I have seen no proof of the wonderful advance of the Japanese to equal this piece of sheer printing. In the text the ritual of flowers, so to speak, and the ceremonial uses of them are explained in a very elaborate and interesting manner. Upon this matter of the use of cut flowers the Japanese are years and even centuries ahead of us; indeed, what ladies in this country call "doing the flowers" is a professional and semi-religious occupation. But on this point it may not be amiss to utter a word of warning. A Japanese wave is sweeping over the floral taste of the nation. It is to be hoped that it may not entirely overwhelm it, for although many things about the floral art of Japan are trustworthy, there are matters in which art tends to be lost in artificiality. Witness the following passage:

"The artificial curves imparted to branches in Japanese compositions are produced by careful bending with the two thumbs and fore-fingers placed close together, and with a force just short of breaking. Some stems of more yielding character will readily assume the required form without snapping, but the harder and more brittle kinds are variously treated. They are sometimes shaved with a knife at the points to be bent, and are softened with boiling water, or heated over a slow fire. A cloth or rag is wrapped round the part to be bent to prevent splintering. If dipped in water after such forcible bending the elasticity is destroyed, and the branch is prevented from returning to its original shape. To avoid ugly angles, it follows that several bends have to be made in a branch to obtain the required curve.

"Means are resorted to in order to keep large heavy blossoms in position in compositions and to prevent them drooping or falling off. Camellia flowers quickly fall, and it is found that keeping damp the junction of the blossoms with their stems by means of salt prevents this. With pæonies, large chrysanthemums, magnolias, sunflowers, and other large blossoms which play an important and fixed role in compositions, their exact number, position, and direction being fixed, it is often necessary to resort to the artificial support of hidden bamboo spikes or wires, though these are tricks not encouraged by the masters for fear of being abused. Even painting is secretly resorted to in some cases to preserve the apparent freshness of colour in flowers and leaves, or to give them the appearance of other more beautiful specimens. The writer has heard of red camellia flowers in compositions being dotted with sulphur to give the appearance of the variegated kind of blossom. The green pine needles, which quickly turn brown and lose their gloss, are often washed with a mixture of gamboge or sulphur and size. The bark of tree stumps is also sometimes painted in a similar way.

"Methods which are, strictly speaking, in violation of the principles of the art as laid down are often resorted to. One of these is the use of *borrowed leaves*, by which is meant leaves of one plant used to embellish the flowers of another plant possessing somewhat similar leaves which are not in condition at the time. There must be some resemblance, however, between the real leaves and the substituted material. The leaves of the young oak tree are in this way sometimes added to rhododendron flowers, the real leaves of which wither and fall before the blossoms.

"In like manner *borrowed flowers* are sometimes added to handsome leaves of a different plant, the flowers of which are in poor condition. Thus to the leaves of the camellia are occasionally added flowers of the Hibiscus syriacus, and to the chrysanthemum leaves the flowers of the Inula britannica are sometimes united. The resemblance here is between the flowers, and not between the leaves of the two growths that are combined.

"Lichen and moss are produced upon branches and stumps of tree cuttings by artificial means. For this purpose the branches are placed on a tile roof exposed to the wet, or kept on the shady side of a house in a damp spot. Moss is considered desirable on the bark of the pine, fir, plum, cherry, cypress, and azalea when thick branches or stubs are used; and lichen is considered suitable for the pine, fir, oak, maple, and willow." Surely a good deal of this is mere artifice, not true art.

## COUNTRY GOSSIPS.—II.

SOME of the old half-timbered cottages in our part of the world are wonderfully picturesque, but they are not the places one would always choose for influenza patients, and most of our population are influenza patients just now. They are made with solid walls, without that air chamber that is so useful in keeping damp out. "The children amuses themselves as they lies in bed mornings breaking the icicles off the ceiling and eating of them," one man, grandfather to the said children, told me, and he himself at the moment enjoying a real good bout of influenza. His diagnosis of his own case was interesting. "Give me a shocking bad taste in my mouth, it do," he said. "One day it was soapsuds and the next it was real bad paint, that it was," with many symptoms too intricate and realistic to recount. "I don't hold with doctors, you see, I don't," he said. "Most of the time it's putting your hand into your pocket, and like as not you don't be

getting no good out of the stuff as they puts into you. I don't hold with 'em." The influenza has prevented not a few from



C. Reid, Wishaw, N.B.

THE DONKEY-BOY.

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volunteering for the war. The young man who has been walking out with one of the maids has volunteered, I am told, and "Lizzie's in a terrible taking about it, she do set such store on her young man." Quite right of Lizzie, but it does not seem quite certain whether an ungrateful and undiscerning country sets equal store on him, for it is still undecided whether his services will be accepted. I am patriotic, I hope, but still soft-hearted enough to hope they will not.

My friend who was so sceptical about the faculty of medicine had but little more faith in remedies than his wife brought him from THE VILLAGE SHOP. (The said shop, by the way, has lately been the scene of terrible rat raids, devastating stores of all kinds. It has been a splendid place for the study of the habits of the rodent tribe.) The standby of this good lady, the wife of my old friend, for all ailments under the sun appeared to be balsam of aniseed, excellent as I fully believe, though my friend the sceptic did not "hold with it." "He says he don't care about anything that isn't British," his wife explained. "That's why he won't take aniseed."

"Is it not British?" I asked, in my ignorance. "Haniseed, no!" the man said, getting his breath after a coughing fit. "Hani-seed's not British; it's Spanish, haniseed is; that's why I don't hold with it—they foreign physics." One lives and learns as one goes among the people.

"Aint they a grand old couple?" the son says enthusiastically as he shows me out. Occasionally you do find these people capable of the most generous and most surprising enthusiasm. An instance of it came out incidentally as this same fellow was telling me how he had played a trick on his mother to see how she would take the notion of his going to South Africa to fight. "'They be coming round soon,' I told the old lady, 'recruiting for the milishy, and I be bound to go then.' And the old 'un, that's mother, she just looks at me a minute stunned like, and then she says, 'Just let 'un come then, just let 'un come to take you away. I can't stand very steady, but by the help o' the good Lord,' she says, 'I'll stand steady enough to give 'un a kick that shall send 'un outside the door, so as he'll never want to come back no more,' and no sooner had she said that than she went right down on the floor and threw her apron over her head and



E. Wigram.

## THE VILLAGE SHOP.

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were waging in South Africa. The fellow's eyes lit up and his cheek flushed. "Aint she a grand old lady? Aint she a splendid old lady?" he said. "'Tis hard upon her, and so it is! Wouldn't one do anything in the world for her, die for her, if it would save her any trouble!" There was absolutely no touch of affectation or of the *poseur* in this. Such an attitude is as far removed as can be from this fellow. But is it not a wonderful thing, this loyalty? Is it not a splendid idea, a splendid tie and bond of national unity? Very few of the country folk have ever even seen the Queen, but this strong sentiment is universal. One asks oneself whether it is possible that quite the same affection can ever be felt for a man on the throne. I am afraid it is hardly to be hoped. My old friend with the influenza did not take a cheerful view of his case, and in this respect one has to show the greatest consideration for the people. It is in the worst possible taste to intimate to them that they are looking well, or better than when you saw them last. Any phrase that seems to indicate you think less lightly of their symptoms than they do strikes them as denoting a want of sympathy. This man's worst symptom as related by himself was

that he had little appetite for his food. "Year in and year out I've worked for Mr. F—," he said, "and better master there is not in the county." A delightful trait in these folk is the generosity of their appreciation either of those in their own or a higher social position. "And yesterday his young missus was down to see me—a pretty thing she is—and brought me some beef-tea and that; but somehow I don't seem to have no relish for it. The only thing at all as I do seem to have a fancy for is that I sometimes do seem as if I'd like to throw my teeth into the loin of a rabbit." In this curious expression of a fancy for employing his few remaining teeth as missile weapons I do not really think he meant to convey a delicate hint; but I acted on it none the less, and the next day had the satisfaction of hearing that he had thrown his teeth with much content into the loin of the rabbit that I made bold to send him.

Shortly after Christmas I went down to see an old lady friend of mine in the almshouses, and found her in a state of twitter so considerable about a letter lately received from her son, that I inferred at once he was with our army in South Africa. But no, she said, "He be 'donkey-boying' down on the sands at L—. Wonderful set on donkeys his mind has been ever since the time he was a boy; seems like they was fellow beings



Mrs. G. E. Hyde.

## A TROUPE OF ITALIAN LADIES.

Copyright.

went into fits of tears." He is a skilful thatcher to his trade, and it is a nearly obsolete trade in these parts, so that he has virtually a monopoly, and thrives by it.

From the subject of the "milishy" we went on to speak of the Queen, and I said how hard it seemed, at the close of such a glorious and, on the whole, such a peaceful reign, that its closing years should be darkened by such a dreadful war as that we



for him." The old lady evidently looked upon these sympathies of her son as a great quality in him. She showed me with much pride a photograph representing him in the pursuit of his calling. It has been an honourable calling ever since days of old, the calling of THE DONKEY-BOY. This L—, I should explain, is our nearest seaside town, a watering-place of some importance thronged with trippers and visitors at holiday times and in the season. I have seen performances of the most astonishing kind—fire-eaters and the rest—on these sands. Once on the cliffs above I caught A TROUPE OF ITALIAN LADIES executing a national dance with the ocean for a background. The letter, the old lady told me, she had carried about in her pocket for days. "I've made out some words of it," she said, with immense satisfaction, and it was clear that this letter was to her as the acrostics in the *World* and other weekly papers are to some people—a subject to ponder over long and assiduously, with immense pleasure when they find a "light." She had made out "some of the words," but for the reading of the whole she had waited for me. It was an enormous honour and privilege. "I don't want any of the neighbours poking and prying into my concerns," she said, haughtily, "and readin' my private letters!" "My private letters" was good, seeing that this was her first and last for the twelve months. Then I read the letter. It wished the old lady a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. It struck me that there was a certain irony about the wish for the poor old thing's Christmastide festivity when she was living all by herself in one of the tiny cottages of the almshouse. But she did not take it at all amiss. It ended by hoping that she would be prosperous in the New Year, as it left the writer. "Lor!" she said when I had finished, "he do write beautiful, just like a story-book."

These folks have the blessed privilege of living in a very beautiful country, a country of orchards, but I do not find that picturesque beauties appeal to them very strongly. They admire works of art, such as the coloured supplements of some of the illustrated weekly papers, much more heartily. The primary colours, laid on as brightly as may be, are what they appreciate, and the "subject" of the picture appeals to them much more than the purely artistic merits. Some of the poor people's lives are very hard no doubt, but now and again one comes on AN IDEAL COTTAGE HOME, and it always seems to realise the perfection of domestic life better than any of the habitations of the wealthy.

## FLIGHTING IN THE KENNET VALLEY.

THE "experienced fowler" will very possibly be inclined to cavil at the use of the term flighting in this connection. And it is quite true that in the Kennet Valley, and, indeed, in most inland districts where wild ducks are to be found in any quantity, there is no regular unfailing line of flight taken

by the ducks every evening when leaving their quiet daily haunts for their nocturnal feeding grounds.

Along the coast, on the other hand, where numbers of wildfowl are known to divide their time at certain seasons of the year between two given places—for example, between the mud flats and islands off shore, and some lake or other sanctuary inland—their line of evening flight practically never varies, and the longshore gunner knows well enough whereabouts to crouch behind the sea wall as the shades of twilight deepen into darkness, and the ducks begin to make their evening change of quarters. Very often, perhaps generally, they will pass high over his head out of harm's way, but on some happy evening, when a mist or fog, or some other cause locally affecting the flight of wildfowl, brings them low over the sea-wall looming through the failing light "as large as life and twice as natural," he may have the most perfect little "corner" all to himself that the heart of a sportsman can desire.

This is "flight shooting" proper. It does not last long, of course; the flight is over in twenty minutes or perhaps half-an-

hour at the outside; but while it does last the sport has all the concentrated excellence of a whole day's driving or covert shooting. The utter loneliness of the surroundings, the distant eerie cries of bird and beast, the straining of eye and ear in the gathering darkness, the tuning of every nerve to the highest pitch of alertness, the occasional "false alarm," and then, at last, the whirring rush of wings, and the hurried "Bang! bang!" followed (let us hope) by a satisfactory thud on the ground forty or fifty yards away, all these elements combine to make flighting one of the most exhilarating and exciting forms of shooting; while the sense of personal triumph, unaided by keepers or beaters, and the successful pitting of man's reason and patience and cunning against the instinct and wariness of the wildfowl, seem to give to one flighting mallard the value of many driven partridges or rocketing pheasants in a sportsman's eyes.

Moreover, on a wet, cold, stormy evening the fascination of going out flighting is, if any-

thing, greater than when the weather is calm and fine, for the increased difficulty and discomfort of the sport only make success the sweeter. And even if the unlucky sportsman should come home bagless and half frozen or drenched, he has at any rate the consolation of being able to spend the rest of the evening in peace with a quiet (sporting) conscience, instead of in reproaching himself for not having gone out regardless of weather, and in picturing the extraordinary sport he would have had "on such a splendid night for duck" if he had done so.

In the Kennet Valley, however, as already stated, there is, speaking generally, nothing at all resembling what the professional wildfowler would call a "flight"—a steady stream of wildfowl passing regularly in the evening between two given places with very small variation of direction. But there are *likely places* where a sportsman may wait on the chance of getting a shot or two. For the ducks here have the habit, which appears to be universal wherever ducks are found, of getting on the move at dusk in twos and threes, or other small parties, and seeking distant feeding grounds for the night. Consequently, a little



Mrs. A. Dawn.

AN IDEAL COTTAGE HOME.

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observation of their movements, and knowledge of their favourite pools and ditches and other resorts, may help one, upon occasion, to a little bit of evening sport, the enjoyment of which is not to be measured by the extent of the bag. To return for a moment to the preliminary objection, waiting at dusk—the true fighting time—at what is only a likely place for a shot, is not flight shooting in the exact sense of the expression already described, but it may conveniently be so termed, as the conditions for shooting are precisely similar, the only small difference being that the uncertainty of what is, at best, a very uncertain sport is many times multiplied.

The likely places for a fighting shot are of two kinds. A sportsman may "lie up" somewhere near a sanctuary where ducks "use" unmolested during the day, so as to try and catch them when they start for their evening flight; or he may take up a position near some pool or reed bed, or other place where he thinks they are likely to pitch for the night.

With regard to sanctuaries, there are several private lakes of varying extent (none very large) between Reading and Marlborough, and, in addition, a number of old peat-workings or pits, which now form marshes and reed beds, often containing pools of considerable size, surrounded by high rushes, locally known as "spires." In all of these ducks breed and live all the year round, their numbers being, of course, considerably augmented by the immigration of outlanders in winter, especially in hard weather. It is, perhaps, needless to state here that fighting in the vicinity of these sanctuaries, or indeed anywhere in the Kennet Valley, is only open to those who have the shooting rights over the ground, and the casual sportsman must go further afield in his search for "free and unappropriated" sporting ground.

Of course, there are isolated fields here and there belonging to small owners, and if they are situated anywhere near a sanctuary the small owner, if he chooses, or his friends and licensees, can harass the ducks considerably, especially early in the season, when the latter are less wild and wary than they subsequently become. The writer can call to mind a long narrow field lying within about 300 yds. of a fair-sized duck preserve, where one fine evening early in August, as he and another gun were taking a walk round just before fighting time, they found the hedge lined by a small regiment of seven guns. There was only one remedy. We betook ourselves to the shelter of two large bushes lying a good 100 yds. nearer the sanctuary, between it and our friends. Presently, when the ducks began to fly after their preliminary gabbling concert, two small parties, after circling round once or twice, came our way. They were a fair height by the time they reached us, but we each had the satisfaction of dropping one, and as our fire, of course, sent the rest up "sky high," we had the further satisfaction of seeing them all sail away safely, in spite of a terrific cannonade from the battalion behind us. This was a very satisfactory evening's work from our point of view; we did not get any more shooting, nor did the other fellows, but we went home quite content with our modest bag of two ducks. If anybody says "Hard lines on the other fellows," I can only rejoin that the case of a man who owns one small field near a private duck preserve, and collects a party of seven guns on it in August to shoot the home-bred ducks as they leave the water, is hardly to be distinguished from that of a man who owns a single field adjoining somebody else's covert, and shoots his neighbour's pheasants there. Such a man is not a kind of "sportsman" who is entitled to much consideration.

In choosing a place to lie up near a sanctuary, the most important thing to settle is which side or point of it will afford the best chance of some shooting, having regard to wind, weather, and other circumstances. This being decided, the "butt" selected must not be too near the preserve (for obvious reasons), and it must afford cover for the gun, whilst allowing him a clear sight of the approaching birds, and ample shooting room. A thick bush about a man's height answers the purpose as well as anything. Unless there are a good many ducks in, his chance of getting a shot in this manner is naturally a very uncertain one. The ducks seldom have any fixed rule or habit of leaving these inland preserves in any particular direction. Sometimes they will go out one way, sometimes another; sometimes they will spread out in twos and threes in different directions; sometimes very few will go out at all. The gun must take his chance. He can only improve it by continuous study of their movements, which may enable him to estimate probabilities. For example, in July and August and the early autumn, when the ducks make for the fields of grain and stubble to feed, he (or his keeper) ought to know by the beginning of August at what point of the preserve a certain number of ducks may probably be expected to fly out on most evenings, and the same process of continuous observation should reveal the fields or stubbles where they usually pitch to spend the night.

In the latter case, the sportsman has the chance of obtaining some fighting shots in the second of the two ways mentioned above, viz., waiting for the ducks at their nocturnal feeding-grounds. This, again, is a very uncertain sport, as, though a

number of ducks may keep pitching in the neighbourhood, none may fly within shot of the sportsman's shelter. On one estate in the Kennet Valley a small field of standing corn, at no great distance from the sanctuary, is always kept uncut right through the harvest for the "benefit" (?) of the ducks, and there, it is said, very good sport is enjoyed on the summer evenings early in the shooting season. The smallness of the field selected points towards the true procedure. The "likely place" must be of such small extent, and have cover so handy, that it is almost, if not quite, entirely commanded by the gun. For example, a fair-sized pool formed by the intersection of two big reedy ditches is a very likely spot, as the ducks like to pitch on the pool and work their way from it up the ditches. If there is no natural cover at hand, and the depth of water or softness of mud makes it impossible for the gun to "crope away" amongst the reeds in the edge of one of the ditches, recourse must be had to the usual tub buried in the ground.

It may, perhaps, be said that a duck "dropping in" offers a far less sporting shot than one coming high and fast away from sanctuary. But this kind of shooting is not such a very easy matter after all. For one thing, a number, probably a majority, of the ducks which approach the place will, by their marvellous sight or instinct, detect danger, however well the gun is hidden, in which case many will never come in shot at all, and the others, flying high or wide, give only difficult chances. And even those which do unsuspectingly attempt to pitch will only be brought to bag by a quick eye and hand, owing to the difficulty of judging pace and distance in the uncertain light. No, it is not easy shooting. And there is another circumstance which infinitely increases the difficulty. In flight shooting proper the ducks are all flying in one direction. In shooting at such a spot as described above, the ducks may approach from any quarter of the compass, though their usual flight is, speaking in general terms, up and down the valley.

Many a splendid chance has one lost by trying to fix one's attention both in front and behind. Many a time has one turned one's head at the "psychological moment," only to hear the ghostly chuckle, like the bleat of a new-born lamb, and the whirring rustle with which two or three ducks sweep over from behind, which a moment or two sooner would have afforded a grand overhead shot straight in front. As it is, they melt instantaneously into space or darkness, most probably without the salute of even a snap shot. It is easy to resolve to concentrate one's attention in one direction, but the resolution is not easy to keep, especially if a duck or two begins to come over from behind. Even in the best of the twilight it takes a very quick shot to drop a duck coming at a fair height and pace over him from behind, unless he hears it coming. If he only sees it when it has passed him, it is good odds on the duck. When the light gets really bad, the sportsman has no option, and faces the glow left by the sunset in the western sky against which a belated duck will show up well. But by the time it is really dark the evening flight is over, and he can shoulder his bag (it will seldom be too heavy) and plod his homeward way.

Without a dog he will probably pick up few, if any, of his birds in the dark, but unless his dog is a quiet, steady, first-class retriever, it will be more hindrance than help, and he had far better leave dead birds and gather them early next morning than take out a restless unsteady brute whose presence may "give the ducks the office" and prevent his getting a single shot.

To sum up—an uncertain sport, and not easy shooting. Sometimes one may neither see nor hear a single duck; sometimes one may only have a single shot and miss it; sometimes—most tantalising of all—a lot of ducks may be on the wing without giving one a chance; sometimes—at intervals—Fortune may smile. In winter the sport is, perhaps, even more uncertain than earlier in the season, for though there may be more ducks about, their movements are more irregular and difficult to anticipate. Yet, waiting for them at dusk, whether early or late in the shooting season, has all the fascination peculiar to proper flight-shooting, and if the bag is usually a small one, the satisfaction obtained is out of all proportion, and there are not many sporting joys which the writer has tasted superior to a successful fighting shot in the Kennet Valley.

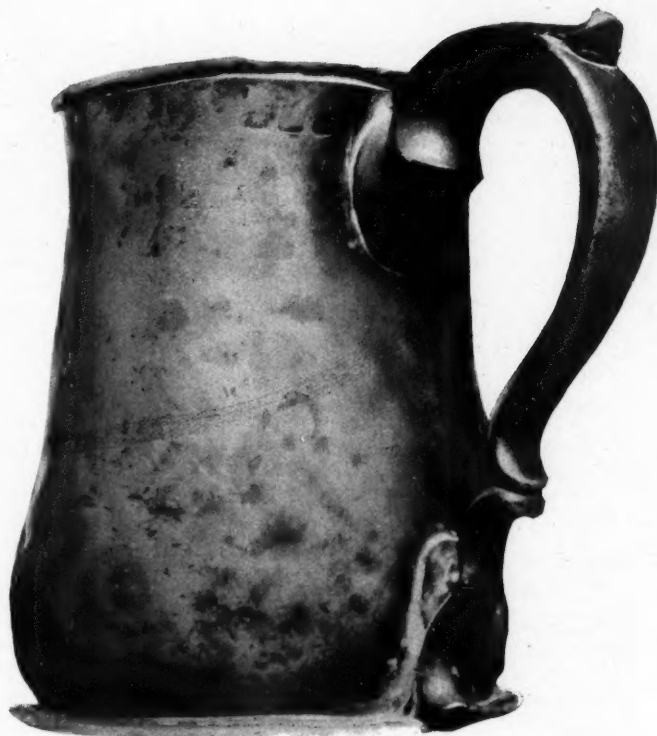
J. S. R.

## STRANGE . . . PAYMENTS.

THE announcement that the Boers will pay for all the goods or eatables they require sounds charmingly honest, but it is to be feared that the Transvaal Government receipt which they tender in remuneration will probably be as valuable as was the silver mark of James II.

That unfortunate monarch, after being dethroned, sought refuge in Ireland about the year 1690, and being hard up thought of an ingenious device to raise funds to further his moribund





Mrs. Delves Broughton.

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## OLD PEWTER POT WITH SILVER HALL-MARK.

cause. He collected from his followers their silver plate, which he melted down, giving them in exchange pewter goods which he had stamped with the silver hall-mark, promising to redeem these pledges when he returned to his throne. But, defeat following defeat, the poor fugitive had to take refuge in France, and, never coming to his own again, the pewter goods with their superior marking were at a discount. To-day they are valuable as curiosities, as few of them have been preserved through all these years, and anything uncommon carries always a fictitious value. The picture here shown is of a battered pewter tankard marked with the silver hall-mark, and now in the possession of Messrs. West and Sons, Sackville Street, Dublin, who prize it far above its apparent intrinsic worth.

Perhaps, if carefully preserved, the Boer receipts will also be of immense value in future ages. EDITH BROUGHTON.

## CRUFT'S . . . . . DOG SHOW.

THIS, the first great dog show of the season, though seriously affected by the unpleasant weather, which rendered the approaches to the Agricultural Hall anything but easy of access, appears to have retained all its old hold upon the affections of the public. Yet, for the reason, apparently, just referred to, there was certainly a diminution in the attendance, but the total number of entries—nearly 3,000—afforded undeniable evidence of the popularity of the exhibition. There were, moreover, champion winners in almost every section, which is not surprising, for a win at Cruft's is regarded as adding immensely to the value of a show dog, this being the exhibition which above all others may be regarded as the one at which the amateurs and the professional dog lovers meet to test the strength of their respective kennels.

Cruft's annual show may, consequently, with every justice be accepted as a fixture that provides exceptional opportunities for arriving at a correct estimate of the popularity and positions of the different breeds, which are always changing, and it may therefore be interesting to consider these. So far as the sporting dog classes are concerned, it appears to be very obvious that the flat-coated Retriever is the breed which of all others is generally beloved. The array of these dogs at the Agricultural Hall last week was superb, and consequently it must have been a matter of no small satisfaction to Mr. Allen Shuter when he won the championship with his puppy, Horton Rectory, still a little broken in coat, as might be expected at his age, but a certain winner of many prizes in the future. The Pointers were only a very moderate collection, nor were the English Setters much above mediocrity; but the Irish were pretty good, and the Gordons contained amongst their number some excellent specimens of a most valuable, though slow ranging, breed. There are, moreover, satisfactory signs of a disposition on the part of Gordon Setter breeders to return to the old and correct type; for although in the days when everybody shot over dogs this variety was sometimes the subject of the reproach that he was only "an old man's dog," the Gordon was very staunch, even if he lacked the pace of the Laverack or the dash of the Irishman; and, as he always had his full complement of admirers in the field, it was surely unjustifiable to alter his appearance by crosses with Irish blood for exhibition purposes. On this ground we certainly disagree with the award which placed the winning bitch at the head of her class, for, though brilliant in her colour, she possessed no middle, and was as narrow as the proverbial knife.

Field Spaniels as a collection were only moderate, but there were most brilliant exceptions, such as Mr. Winton Smith's first prize Clumber, the happy

possessor of perfect expression, the best of heads and bodies, and the true Clumber markings of coat. Mr. Wooland's Sussex and blacks no doubt frightened all serious opposition away from their respective classes, but his best are alone worth paying a visit to a show to see; and very much the same observations apply to Mr. James Farrow's Cockers, which are, and have been for a generation past, the feature of their section at most important shows. Mr. Farrow's Cockers, in fact, possess a workmanlike appearance, which is by no means general amongst the show specimens one sees about, and hence doubtless their unvarying successes; for though his weight be little, the Cocker must look fit for work, and the heart of a sportsman revolts against the toy type, which, though unquestionably beautiful, is not quite the thing. The Irish classes at this show were simply a fiasco of such a pronounced degree that serious criticism is impossible.

Collies were a great show, the championship falling to the Princess de Montglyn's superb tri-colour Barwell Masterpiece, which she has just purchased at an enormous price from Mr. John Powers, for whom he had won many very important prizes. Bulldogs, too, were numerous, and as many great winners were in the ring, it ought to be stated that the quality was good, but the type has been so altered that it is hard to express an opinion on the matter, though there is no doubt that the animal which won the championship, Mr. Marfleet's Bromley Crib, is a wonder, and that he was miles ahead of any of his opponents goes without saying. Fox-terriers apparently possess perennial popularity, but there is a disposition, we think, to exaggerate the accepted type, which breeders of this fashionable dog will do well to bear in mind. In this section Mr. Francis Redmond had matters, as usual, all his own way in the smooths, for he won four first prizes with one animal in dogs, and two in bitches; whilst Mr. Pitts, Mr. Philipson, and the Duchess of Newcastle—Her Grace, by the way, judged some very good classes of Borzois admirably—were all represented by some excellent wire-hairs. Irish Terriers were excellent, and so were the Welshmen and Airedales, Dandies and Skyes, whilst the hard-haired Scottish Terriers were very fair, but these useful dogs are being bred too big, and the prevalence of white markings on the breast should be rigorously discouraged. Dachshunds made a capital show, the turn-out of Dapples being a distinct compliment to the judge, Mr. George Krehl, who first introduced this variety into England, whilst Basset-hounds, another breed which he helped to make, were capital, Mr. Croxton-Smith's first prize winner Wantage being claimed for £150. Great Danes, in which section Mrs. Horsfall was most successful; Chow Chows, amongst which Chow VIII. succeeded in retaining his pre-eminence, and Old English Sheepdogs were good, as were the Bloodhounds, in which classes Mr. Edwin Brough showed some superb hounds, his grand Babbo being very unlucky to be beaten in the open dog class, as the winner is faulty in shoulders by comparison.

So much for the most attractive features of this great show, but, unfortunately, there is a reverse side to the picture, for many breeds were indifferently represented, and some even badly. The Mastiffs, for instance, were distressing classes to those who can remember the days of Turk and Rajah, of Wolsey, and of even the dudley-nosed Crown Prince. Will no patriotic Englishman come forward and assist the few, very few, alas! staunch friends of the Mastiff in their efforts to save an old national variety from extinction? Bull-terriers were also a very poor lot; and Greyhounds, which are seldom numerous, were not at all what they might be. St. Bernards for a long time past have been losing ground, and somehow a nasty mastiffy look, which is most unbecoming to the breed, has been introduced into many strains. Such varieties as Otter-hounds, and that admixture of Great Dane and Deerhound known as Wolfhounds, can never be expected to be numerously represented; whilst the Toy classes were naturally weak at this season of the year, as their delicate constitutions cause their owners to be reluctant to expose them to any risks of contracting chills. Still, Toy Bulldogs were fairly represented, and as times go good, but there appear to be no serious attempts made on the part of their admirers to improve their ears and faces, which is a pity, for at present there is much good work to be done in these directions. Still, taken all in all, Cruft's was a great show, and an excellently managed one, the popularity which it has earned for itself being thoroughly deserved, whilst in the majority of instances the decisions of the judges were extremely well received.



THE frost has not only stopped racing, but it has stopped all work at Newmarket and elsewhere. It may well be that the loss of a fortnight may alter the result of the Lincolnshire Handicap. At all events, it will favour those who run best a little on the big side. There are more numerous than is generally supposed. A horse that is at all overworked is less likely to come near to his form than one which would have been better for a gallop or two more than he has had. Those light, wiry horses that come to hand in a comparatively short time are seldom as good stayers as those which require more time and will stand more work. Good feeders are generally good stayers, and such horses are naturally inclined to be gross. Against the loss of time we may set the fact that there is a considerable probability that the going up to, and at the time of, the races will be on the soft side. So far as my information goes, Sir Geoffrey, Heir Male, Downham, and Wantage had all done good work up to the frost, and useful trotting work since. Gerolstein and Refractor (if he starts) probably have had all they need, and I still find it impossible in the case of the latter to forget his Hunt Cup win and the class of the horses he beat at Ascot. All that remains, therefore, is to suggest that my readers should watch these horses, more particularly in their work, and make their own selection in the paddock before the race, being guided by the fitness of the horses or their places in the betting, according to the view they take of racing.

Mr. Bulteel still declines to show his hand for the Grand National, but I hold to the opinion that Drogheda is the more likely horse of the two. If, as some people say, he was wound up the other day at Kempton, the fortnight's rest will do him no harm, and he will come on all the better for being fit before his rest. Two horses that everyone talks about are Tipperary Boy and Levanter. Neither seems to have much pretension on public form to win at Aintree, but we are assured that Tipperary Boy has come on immensely. He is a son of that grand horse Royal Meath, and has, therefore, galloping and jumping blood in his veins. Now, when the game of steeplechasing is played fairly, and

we rise above the class of £50 selling chasers and hurdle racers, there is nothing like hereditary racing and jumping powers as a guide to the judgment. As to any breeding system I am sceptical, unless, indeed, to breed from animals with a gift for winning races and getting safely over big courses be a system.

Thus Tipperary Boy has on his side hereditary aptitude. On the other hand, he has weight enough for a horse of his age (six years) in a race so often won by seasoned horses in the Grand National. Everything, however, points to the Irish party thinking or wishing us to think that he is a more likely candidate than the Prince of Wales's horse. There can, in any case, be no doubt that Tipperary Boy is doing good work, and, with the disappearance of the frost, he has gone back to the Curragh. Of Levanter I know nothing, except that

our old political and racing friend—the man in the street—is making a great tip of him.

It was satisfactory to learn, with other good news, that Mr. Reginald Ward had escaped from a great danger when his horse was killed by the bursting of a Boer shell, and that Captain Wilfrid Ricardo is well and unhurt at Pretoria. The friend and brother officer of the latter—the Duke of Roxburghe—is said to have saved the life of one of his troopers in very gallant fashion. All three officers are well known in the polo and hunting field; two of them will be familiar figures as among the best of our soldier amateurs between the flags.

It looks as if by this time next week there would be some racing to record, and it is possible, though not very likely, that coming events may throw some light on the Liverpool chase.

VEDETTE.

## OWLS AS PETS.

**A**MONG the many bird pets which I have kept at different times, owls have always been my favourites. Even before I had ever seen an owl I always longed to have one as a pet. There was something irresistibly attractive to me in the picture of the strange solemn-looking bird which only came out by night, and haunted dark woods and ivy-mantled ruins. Perhaps its cat-like appearance, too, had something to do with it, for to me owls always seem more like cats than birds, and I quite sympathise with the boy who described an owl which he discovered crouching in a hollow tree as "for all the world like a great cat with a claw at the end of its nose." However this may be, I well remember the rapture with which I was filled when a friend, returning from a walk in the country, brought back as a trophy a young horned owl, which duly became my property. Though filled with admiration at its personal appearance, its great yellow eyes and little budding horns, as the two feathers which stick up on the head of this species are called, I was a little disappointed at finding my overtures received in a decidedly hostile spirit, and I went away from my first interview with the bird of mystery with a beautiful impression of his claws and beak upon the back of my hand. It must be confessed that this individual owl, having been captured some time after leaving the nest, did not turn out a very desirable pet, but I was not discouraged. I have always found that most interest attaches to those pets which we manage to secure for ourselves, and certainly of all the birds which I have at different times kept, those which have cost me the longest walk and the hardest climb have generally been my favourites. Consequently, my one ambition for a long while was to find an owl's nest for myself. For many years, even at the time when I could pick out the most cunningly hidden nest of the blackcap or garden warbler, and tell exactly which corner of the wood in which to search for the tiny wood wren, I should have considered the finding of an owl's nest as a feat far beyond me, partly for the reason that I had only a limited idea of owls at home, that being in connection with hollow trees, of which there was a plentiful lack about our northern county, or of ruined castles and towers, of which there was an absolute dearth. The fact also of the owl being still to me a bird of mystery—for at that time I had never even heard, far less seen, a real live owl—prevented me from ever dreaming that there might be nests for the finding in the neighbourhood; and yet all this while there were no less than three different species of owls close at hand, and I have no doubt that, had I only known where to look, I could have found their nests as easily as I can do now.

Old hawks' and magpies' nests are favourite building sites for both tawny and long-eared owls. These, of course, can easily be seen on account of their size. A few raps with a stick on the tree trunk, or a rotten branch thrown at the nest, will soon let you know if it is inhabited, for the old bird will fly noiselessly off down the wood, followed by a hue and cry from blackbirds, thrushes, and chaffinches, and in fact every little songster in the



YOUNG BARN OWLS.

vicinity. Sometimes the tawny owl will lay its eggs upon the ground in a little hollow at the foot of a tree, or sometimes even in a disused rabbit's burrow.

I shall never forget my first tawny owl. News had been brought me that an owl had been seen to fly from a certain tree in a wood hard by. Straightway I started off with a fellow-naturalist to search for the nest. The first day, owing to want of time, we were unsuccessful, but on the next, upon our going once again to the spot, up flew the old bird, and there upon the branch of the very tree to which we had been directed we beheld two fluffy little owls just out of the nest, which, owing to its having been in an old squirrel's drey about a hundred yards from the spot, we had failed to find the day before. Both birds were secured without much trouble, my friend taking one and I the other. Darby, as we called him, certainly had the makings of a fine owl, and I laid myself out to develop his good qualities.

He was kept in a roomy cage, and occasionally allowed to pass the night in an adjoining cellar. He soon learned to hop on to his master's arm for his food, and before long became as playful as any kitten. His favourite game consisted in playing with a small feather brush. When tickled with this instrument he would put on an appearance of the greatest interest, and gravely extending a claw, would close it with much deliberation upon the feathers, and then proceed to examine his capture with an air of tremendous wisdom. Occasionally he was taken out into the open air, but as he took to flying into the dark cover of the trees, sometimes a little higher than was safe, his liberty had to be curtailed. Poor Darby! One morning when going into the cellar where he had been passing the night, I was surprised at his not flying down as usual for his breakfast. I called, but received no answer. I hunted everywhere, but in vain. I listened, and at last heard a faint gurgling noise proceeding from a corner. Hurrying up, there at the bottom of a large earthenware jar I found him floating in a foot and a-half



E. Landor.

THREE OWLS ON A PERCH.

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Kennedy. FORTY WINKS. Copyright

of water, with nothing but his great head showing above the surface, the feathers round his neck seeming to support him like a buoy. He had tried to get at the water in the jar, and succeeded only too well. He must have been in several hours, for when pulled out he lay upon my hand with hardly a sign of life, looking like a bunch of wet feathers, the most pitiful object I ever cast eyes upon.

Much as I should like to narrate in detail for the instruction of my readers the story of his illness,

and how after lingering between life and death for a whole week he finally recovered, I must content myself with stating that recover he did, owing, I say it with some pride, to the medical treatment to which I subjected him.

I was not destined to keep my pet long, however. One day whilst I was feeding him he took it into his head to fly to the very top of a high tree close at hand. I left his cage open, fully expecting him to return towards evening, but, with singular ingratitude, he seemed to prefer his freedom, and though for several days he continued to frequent the grounds, he displayed no anxiety to return, and so I finally lost him.

At present I have no less than three tawny owls, which I have reared from the nest; two I took from an old hawk's nest, and one from a hole in the wall of a tumbledown cottage. They have been brought up in company with several other bird pets, magpies, jackdaws, and hawks, and when quite young it was an exceedingly pretty sight to see them all together on one perch, watching the proceedings of the jacks and magpies with an air of absorbing interest. Sometimes a jack would fly up to the perch and give one of the tawnies a friendly dig with his beak, for all the world as though he wanted to say, "Wake up, old fellow." Whereupon the owl would proceed with great gravity to comb the disturber's plumage with beak and claw, occasionally pausing during the operation and surveying his work with half-open eye, Jack the while winking at his mates below with an air of, "It's all right; it pleases the old buffer."

Barn owls also I have kept at different times, and found them very amusing pets. My first I got from a barn where for several years a pair had nested in an old pigeon cote. Jeff we called him, and a funny-looking object he was when first his education was begun. From a little ball of fluff with an impish face at one extremity and a pair of remarkably sharp claws at the other, he developed into a very fine bird, and would fly down in broad daylight from his cage to catch a live mouse, and then

back again to make a meal of it. The process was always the same, and characterised by its extreme simplicity. Having seized the mouse by the head and crushed the skull with a couple of quick crunches, he would allow it to hang perpendicularly down, then two deliberate gulps, followed by a fearful grimace, and the mouse was three-quarters way down. At this point time would be called, and he appeared to gather all his strength together for a final effort; another

gulp, and nothing was left but the end of the tail protruding from one side of the beak. He would then begin to roll his head from side to side with a circular motion, like a conjurer waving his hands to fascinate his audience, when hey presto! and the tail was no longer there; after which he would draw himself up, perpetrate another fiendish face, and was ready for a second mouse. I have seen him swallow three in succession, and have no doubt that had he been offered a fourth he would have been equal to the occasion. Incredible, too, as it may seem to those who have never witnessed the feat, he would think nothing of taking down a whole sparrow, feathers and all, and upon one occasion I remember giving him a swallow, and though for several minutes after the body had vanished the long tail feathers remained poking jauntily out of his beak like a cheroot, he seemed quite contented to wait until room was made below for them as well. Of course, most of my readers will be aware of the fact that feathers or fur and bones are a necessary part of the diet of birds of prey, especially owls, and that a process is gone through inside by which every particle of flesh is separated from the indigestible matter, which later on is ejected from the beak in the form of a pellet or "casting," as it is called. By examining these castings, one is able to determine accurately what goes to form the "menu" of these birds in their wild state. Personally, I have never found anything but the remains of mice and rats in the pellets of the barn owl, which goes far to demonstrate the extreme utility of this bird to the farmer, though at the same time I have no doubt that in a locality where mice and such small deer are scarce an occasional bird would not come amiss. On my last visit to a barn owl's nest I found laid by for future consumption three full-grown field mice and a young rat. In the nest of the tawny owl, on the other hand, I have found remains for the most part of birds, such as thrushes and chaffinches, though this species is capable of coping with a good-sized rat.

But of all the owls which I have at different times kept, none, not even Darby, ever came up to a pair of horned or



DIGNIFIED AND STATELY.

long-eared owls, which no visitor to my collection ever cast eyes on without being filled with the desire of possessing them. One I took myself from an old sparrow-hawk's nest in a Scotch fir; the other was procured for me when scarcely three days old, and was brought up in company with a pair of young kestrels. As soon as ever they were able to use their wings I transferred them from the nursery in my room to the outdoor aviary, where they speedily made themselves at home. Whenever I entered the cage these two would fly to my shoulder, or even upon my head, and sturdily resist all attempts to shake them off. I used frequently to take them out to chase a mouse in the open, and even allowed them to spend a part of the day in the trees in the garden, taking the precaution, however, to let them out before, not after, their breakfast, so that whenever I appeared on the scene and called, they were sure to answer me, and would often fly right down in anticipation of a meal. One day, owing to a mistake on the part of a boy whom I had left in charge of my pets, they were left out, not only all day, but all night also. As I had anticipated, during the night-time, finding no one to feed them, they foraged for themselves, presumably with considerable success, for next day, when I went round calling for them, they must have been sleeping off their unwonted midnight meal, for I received no answer, and, in fact, never again beheld them.

I will conclude with a brief word of advice to anyone wishing to try the experiment of owl-keeping for himself. You can scarcely take an owlet too young from its nest, for they are easier to rear than any bird I know of, provided always they are kept sufficiently warm. When grown up, feed your pet always by hand, making him come to you for his food. Keep a supply of fresh water for bathing and drinking purposes, for though I have known a barn owl to live a year without a drop of water, the other two species are very fond of a bath.

With attention to these points, any of my readers may succeed as I have done with my pets, and will come to agree with me that the much-maligned bird of night is well worth making a friend of.

R. R.



Kennedy. WIDE AWAKE. Copyright



## AT THE THEATRE

THE performance of Mr. Louis N. Parker's fine "Masque of War and Peace"—with music by Mr. Hamish MacCunn—on Tuesday evening of last week, by fashionable amateurs, in aid of the funds of the Household Troops now at the front, was a remarkable function

socially, the theatre being filled both before and behind the curtain by well-known members of the aristocracy and Society. Mr. Tree half promises us that he will, at a later date, revive Mr. Parker's stirring work, when it would be interpreted by professional actors and actresses. The journals were so occupied with the social side of the occasion, that but scant justice has been done to the admirable writing of Mr. Parker, whose Masque, so full of martial spirit, quiet humour, lofty sentiment, and pretty fancy, deserves a wider recognition than that obtainable at one performance, however unique and aristocratic. We shall give our readers more pleasure by quoting three of the numbers of the Masque, and bringing before them an idea of its scope, than by detailed criticism of it at this time. We believe that no similar quotations have appeared elsewhere.

Sonorous and Swinburnian is the swell of the apostrophe to England, given by the Spirit of War, impersonated at Her Majesty's by Miss Muriel Wilson. War tells of the hate of a jealous Europe:

"The tramp of the feet of hurrying hosts, the clash of the foe nan's blade, Is heard in the silence of gathering darkness—England, art thou afraid? They arise, they sharpen their swords, their throats are athirst for thy blood, In numbers as sands of the desert, in might as the might of a flood. Their eyes are ablaze with the lust of hate, and hoarsely they mutter thy name; They would find thee unready, unguarded, and helpless, and put thee to shame; For, behold! in the days of their fathers they tasted the edge of thy sword, And thy hand has humbled the mighty, as the right hand of the Lord.

"What is it to them, that thy sons go forth, through hunger of peril and death, To spread the light of truth in the world, and to fill it with God's own breath? What is it to them that from Grinnel-land to the deserts of far Cathay Thy lamp has driven the darkness out and summoned the dawn of day? They hate the day and they hate the truth, and seeing thee sleep in the sun, They dream a dream in their foolishness that thy fighting days are done. They fable thy glory shall wane from Heav'n, like the waning of a star, And, behold! thou standest erect and clad in the panoply of war!

"From the ends of the earth thy sons have rallied—they come from the South and the North, From East and from West at thy trumpet-call the war-men have issued forth. 'We love thee, Mother!' the shout goes up, 'for thou hast given us birth, And never the name of England shall fade from the shuddering earth!' Be comforted, Mother of Nations, thy light shall shine anew, For the love of the many shall gladden thy heart, made sad by the hate of the few. They shall not touch thee, they cannot strike thee; their hands, made ready to kill, Fall palsied and dead, for thy warriors wake, and England is England still!"

Neptune (Mr. Leo Trevor) enters, clad in the uniform of a British sailor of olden days—"For why? Britannia rules the waves, don't she? Rules 'em straight, too, from the Pole to the Equator, and back round t'other side. So she ups and ses, Wear my uniform, she ses. And I ses, Make it so! And proud I am of it." He is asked for news of the war, and replies:

"Oh, I've heerd nowt o' the war, Though I wanted to jine in the fray; But your soldiers in khaki to the land of the darky I bore in an elegant way. I wafled 'em tender and kind, As though they was brittle as glass, They said, 'Mister Ocean, don't make a commotion!' I answered oblegingly, 'Pass!'

"I commanded my winds to keep still, I commanded my waves to lie low; For the lads I delight in was goin' a-fightin'— My watchword was just 'Make it so!'

It wasn't for me to object,  
Or agin 'em to mike any  
bars,  
Howsoe'er I deplore that the  
fightin's on shore,  
And the Tommies not jolly  
Jack Tars.

"I axed the Sea-sarpint for  
news,  
As down by the cable he's  
dwellin',

He told me my sons had landed some guns,  
And showed 'emseives handy at she lu'.  
Wheerby of the beggars I'm proud,  
For putt every man to the test.  
On sea or on land, I warrant he'll stand  
Up top, right along o' the best."

Mercy (Mrs. William James) tells of the home-coming, while in the distance we hear the sound of the fifes and drums:

"Are you coming, Mr. Atkins, are you coming from afar?  
(Oh, what is the fifyng and the drumming?)  
Have you done your deeds of glory, have you finished with the war?  
It's your footstep, Mr. Atkins, are you coming?  
Are you coming over seas,  
Coming home to take your ease,  
Coming home to kiss the girl you left behind you—  
Left behind you in our care?  
Hope you'll say we acted fair,  
For she's well, and she's waiting here to find you.

"Don't imagine, Mr. Atkins, that it's worse to go and fight  
(Oh, the thrill of the fifyng and the drumming!)  
Than it is to wait and wonder in the silence of the night,  
Whether you're among the thousands that are coming.  
You've been hammering the foe,  
You've been letting of him know,  
And compiling pretty stories worth the telling;  
She's been straining eyes and ears,  
She's been sobbing down her fears,  
When the noisy little news-boys came a-yelling.

"Yes, she's waiting, Mr. Atkins, and her heart is very sore,  
(Oh, it aches to the fifyng and the drumming!)  
With her apron to her eyes she's half hid behind the door,  
And she thinks she hears your footstep! Are you coming?  
And she's waiting with the kid,  
And she don't care what you did,  
She'll hear about your glorious deeds to-morrow;  
But to-day, ah! to-day,  
Take and kiss her tears away,  
Take and lift her into heaven, out of sorrow!"

We think our readers will not begrudge the space occupied in bringing before them parts of an entertainment in many respects unique, an entertainment which will result in over £6,000 for the charity on whose behalf it was devised by Mrs. Arthur Paget, and carried out by enthusiastic ladies and gentlemen, under the stage direction of Mr. Beerbohm Tree.

MR. BENSON'S company does such good work that one is unwilling to cool its ardour with faint praise; but when it appears at the Lyceum Theatre, London, it challenges criticism of a different nature from that which meets it in the country. In many respects it is an admirable organisation, earnest and intelligent; but—and it is a hard thing to have to say—if the powers of its leading figure, Mr. Benson himself, are to be gauged by his performance of Henry V., we must reluctantly express the opinion that its representations of classic drama can never be inspiring, inspiriting, or anything but mediocre.

Mr. Benson's talents as a manager are no doubt of primary importance to the success of the organisation; but as an actor—if we are to judge from his performance of the King in "Henry V."—he has few qualifications for the proper interpretation of heroic characters. He has an evident love for his work, which counts for much; he is earnest, and not without dignity. But something more is required—a resonant voice capable of change and variety, and of giving different notes to the lights and shades of passion and sentiment; a knowledge of elocution,



deportment, and gesture; a mobile and expressive countenance; a power of simulating emotion and spirit; personal magnetism. All of these make perfection; some of these are absolutely necessary. None of them does Mr. Benson possess—judging by his Henry. Mr. Benson's ear, too, seems at fault; the metre and rhythm of lines without number he ruined by the addition or omission of feet to or from Shakespeare's measures.

There are many very capable actors in the company. Mr. Frank Rodney, as the Duke of Exeter; Mr. E. A. Warburton, as the Archbishop of Canterbury; Mr. G. R. Weir, as Fluellen; Mr. Oscar Asche, as Pistol; Mr. H. O. Nicholson, as Nym; Mr. Asheton Tonge, as Bardolph; Mr. Alfred Brydone, as the King of France; Miss Kitty Loftus, as the Boy; and Miss Denoil as the Hostess, all acted with spirit, with intelligence and the power of interesting.

The staging of the play gives evidence of care and liberality; albeit now and again one wished that it had been less pretentious, because spectacle must be exceedingly well done to be pardoned. Nevertheless, the mounting and the stage-management were careful and adequate. Curious and somewhat inconsequential deletions have been made in the text, and scenes have been brought together which should be divided by lapses of time—the result being rather bewildering now and again. Nevertheless, the whole effect is praiseworthy and well-intentioned.

It is with genuine regret that one feels it a duty to tell the whole truth about an enterprise so thoroughly deserving and dignified. But, though it sounds harsh, the truth, as one sees it, has to be told. Let us hope sincerely that subsequent revivals will modify the impression of Mr. Benson's acting.

**F**ACING the Music," at the Strand Theatre, is a really funny rough-and-tumble farce of the old school, admirably acted. The author, Mr. Darnley, very wisely never gives his audience a moment to think, but rushes them along madly through three acts of merry and harmless nonsense. Given a clever executant, it is not a difficult task to make hilarity out of mistaken identity, but there are not many playwrights who could keep the ball rolling with the dexterity of Mr. Darnley.

It is quite possible that in one of the huge blocks of modern flats there should be two people of the not uncommon name of John Smith. So it happens in "Facing the Music." One of them is a stage curate of the conventional—the too conventional—type, the other is a racing man. The wives of both of them are away, and the curate has engaged the furnished suite during his wife's absence. She returns unexpectedly, installs herself in the wrong flat, and the developments which arise are extraordinary. The Turf gentleman, whose wife also returns unexpectedly, is taken for a Mormon, and everyone is taken by everyone else for a member of a gang of swell housebreakers.

Of course it is not difficult to keep up the embroglio by taking each person off the stage on some pretence when the moment for explanation should arrive; neither is it high art; but that is easily forgiven in an unpretentious piece of work when the result is so whimsical as in "Facing the Music." The farce has the advantage of very spirited and whole-hearted acting by Mr. James Welch, Mr. Victor Widdicombe, Miss Vane Featherstone, Miss Bessie Major, and pretty Miss Lettice Fairfax.

Fun of quite a different order is that of "His Excellency the Governor," at the Criterion Theatre—now under the joint management of Mr. Charles Windham and Mr. Arthur Bourchier. The revival is as welcome as it is unexpected. Captain Marshall's delicate wit, fertility and originality of invention, and flashes of quaint and whimsical humour in incident and language, arouse hearty laughter and at the same time please the literary sense—a rare combination! And the author gives us many little touches of pleasant sentiment, too—just as he did in "A Royal Family." "His Excellency the Governor" is full of interest in its action, of spice in its good-humoured satire, of cleverness in its observation, and of sprightliness in its dialogue. In many respects he has qualities which place him nearest to Mr. Pinero as a writer of plays of dainty thought and stimulating ideas.

The performance at the Criterion is delightful. Miss Irene Vanbrugh, in her old part of Stella de Gex, acts with delicious naïveté, lightness of touch, and sense of fun, and the charm of the piece is considerably enhanced by the appearance of Miss Gertrude Elliott and Mr. Marsh Allen, who play the more sentimental scenes very prettily and gracefully. No better acting than that of Mr. Eric Lewis, Mr. Dion Boucicault, Miss Fanny Coleman, and Mr. Arthur Bourchier could be wished for.

PHŒBUS.

## SHOOTING GOSSIP.

**F**OR several seasons trap-shooting would seem to have lost much of the popularity which it enjoyed between, say, five and ten years ago, but the approaching season is likely to bring it once more to the front, for already no less than three really brilliant Italian marksmen have signified their intention to compete at Hurlingham, as well as at the Gun Club, in the spring, and I have it on the best authority that a well-known Danish pigeon shooter who has not as yet appeared in this country will come over in May solely in order to shoot at the Gun Club. A popular Spanish Count and a Russian Ambassador also intend to face the traps in England this season, "their first appearance at any English gun club," to quote the phraseology of the *entrepreneur*. In addition, several young Englishmen, known to be excellent game shots, will make their first appearance at the traps. Now that Lord Lovat, the Hon. R. S. Beresford, and so many other well-known pigeon shooters are in South Africa, it is satisfactory to hear that new men are to take their places, and so keep the ball rolling. The match for £1,000 a side, to be shot between an Englishman and an Italian, of which I spoke in COUNTRY LIFE of January 13th, has been temporarily postponed, owing to the Englishman having been ordered to the front.

Several correspondents ask for fuller particulars concerning the detachable

muzzle to which I alluded a fortnight ago. I can only add that it exactly resembles 2in. of gun-barrel sliced off the muzzle of any ordinary double shot-gun. It weighs only a few ounces, and is attached to the muzzle of the gun by means of two screws, one of which passes into the upper rib, the other into the lower. The barrels to which it is to be attached should, of course, be perfect cylinders if full benefit is to be derived from the additional muzzle. I do not know any man who makes use of the device in England, for the simple reason that a man shooting in Great Britain only would seldom need it. Colonists, however, find the contrivance of great service.

A contemporary lately informed its readers that a shot-gun had been invented which would kill game at 100yds., "and even at greater distances." It is sincerely to be hoped that no such murderous weapon will ever be adopted in England, for in that case game of all kinds would soon grow scarce, while what was left would become practically ungettable. A device almost as deadly as this "improved" shot-gun was last week brought under my notice, nothing less than an improved shrapnel for shot-guns, a shrapnel which, according to the inventor, "is capable of killing flying grouse at 150yds. or so." The principle of this deadly missile is almost exactly similar to that of the shrapnel for shot-guns which was so largely advertised some twelve years ago. In the new device, however, the metal caps which enclose the charge of shot are cone-shaped instead of oval; they are three in number, and the spindle which holds them together until they fly asunder is regulated somewhat differently from that of the original shrapnel for shot-guns, which was made in two sections only.

On the whole, the new shell is an ingenious contrivance, yet I doubt if it will ever become popular, at any rate, in England, for, after all, who in the world wants to kill grouse at 150yds.? It always seems to me that inventors who turn their attention to what they term the improvement of small arms become so engrossed in their work and so enthusiastic about the actual improvements which they wish to effect that oftener than not they overlook the fact that the requirements of practical sportsmen have to be taken into consideration, and that the practical sportsman's highest ambition is not the wholesale destruction of life by any and every means available.

The "heated gun-stock," which a large firm of gunmakers endeavoured to thrust upon shooting men last season by means of private advertisement and what may be termed "faked" booming, has proved a failure, or, at least, shooting men seem to have made up their minds that they will not have "the muffish thing," as they call it, at any price. This is hardly to be wondered at. Yet I would advise the firm in question to persevere, and to turn their attention especially to wildfowling, for of all blood-chilling forms of sport wildfowl shooting is, when thoroughly indulged in, one of the chilliest, as many of us know only too well. I gave the "warmer" an unbiassed trial on a certain bitterly cold day in Northumberland. We were ferreting rabbits, which persistently refused to bolt, and I remember that the warm stock proved an unmitigated blessing, though at first I had not sufficient moral courage to tell either of the other guns that whereas their fingers were rapidly turning blue under the influence of a cutting easterly blast, mine remained as comfortable as when we started. For the benefit of the uninitiated I may mention that the heating apparatus fits into a recess bored in the stock itself, the cavity being visible only when the heel-plate is removed.

B. J. T.



**A** STOUT pair of boots and trusty stocking equipment, I started out to see something of hunting in the snow with beagles. At all events one would hear the cheery cry of hounds, and the exercise would hinder that laying on of flesh which is so hard to prevent. It is one of the penalties that attach to having been in hard condition all one's life, that directly exercise is eased off one puts on flesh with startling rapidity after one reaches middle life. Like an old horse, which needs more work the day after hunting than a young one, because his joints stiffen more readily, so the veterans of the sliding seat, the cinder path, or the saddle require more work than younger men. I like beagling in the snow for another reason—it chokes off the riders who are always encroaching on the sport of beagling. Riding to beagles may be very good fun for the riders—I cannot say I think it is so myself—but it is death to the runners, for the little hounds go much faster when a dozen or so horsemen are at their heels than when only the one horseman, well wide of the pack, which is the sporting thing, is allowed. Moreover, beagling is essentially a hound sport, owing everything to the working of the pack, and the hounds, of course, become unsteady with horses round them on every side. Their work then becomes bad harrier work. Then Masters are too apt to be careless about their packs. Beagles should be bred very carefully, because half the charm consists in seeing a pack of which the individuals are known to us working out the puzzles set by a good hare. Men who run for half a day with beagles must be sportsmen at heart, and should be encouraged each and all to take a personal interest in the quality and working of the hounds. Hunting over snow, whether with foxhounds in a big covert or with beagles in the open, has a charm of its own. Snow causes a good scent, and there is a rare melody from the hounds, which comes to us strangely muffled through the heavy snow-laden air. At all events it is hunting, it is exercise, and a day in the open.

The most important news of the week, and of good augury for hunting, is that Lord Manvers, better known to most people as Lord Newark, has accepted the Mastership of the Rufford Hunt. Lord Manvers is a large land-owner, and has just that local position and popularity needed for a Master. He loves the sport, and is interested in hound breeding. That he thoroughly grasps the position and duties of a Master may be seen by reading the very excellent speech he made on accepting the Mastership. As a large covert owner he spoke with authority when he asked that hounds might be allowed to draw pheasant coverts before November. The September and early October cub-hunting makes every difference to the prospects of sport throughout the season. If hounds are

never allowed to draw at all before Christmas, hunting becomes difficult indeed in a woodland country like the Rufford. There is no doubt that woods should be kept quiet for at least a fortnight before a big shoot; there is also no doubt that cub-hunting does no harm to the shooting, and, in my opinion, hand-reared birds in coverts well routed by hounds rise much better than where they are allowed to become too tame. X.

## SALMON FISHING IN NEWFOUNDLAND.

EVERYONE has heard much of late of Newfoundland through the French Shore entanglement—that puzzle of history—arising from the conflicting claims of ownership of a large strip of the southern and western shores of the island. Few are aware of the variety of attractions it has to offer to the tourist and sportsman. Even to those who consider themselves well informed about its resources and natural features it presents itself usually as a forbidding region, walled in by an iron coast, by snows and Arctic tides, and usually wrapped in the gloom of fogs and tempests. But of late sportsmen have begun to visit the western coasts, and the conviction has dawned on the mind of many a summer Rambler that this part of the world has been misrepresented, and that during the short and beautiful summer it offers a variety of attractions up to this time almost undiscovered by the ubiquitous globe-trotter.

Sailing along the western shore there is much to remind the traveller of Norway. The coast is high and bold; deep fiords indent the shores everywhere. The entrance to the little land-locked harbours is often through extremely narrow gateways between lofty escarpments of bare rock, affording exceedingly picturesque and even magnificent scenery. The effect is often enhanced by the pleasing appearance of the villages, the cottages nestling anywhere and everywhere among the rocky ledges, according to the fancy and taste of the owners. Not alone are the scenery and the bright skies and the exhilarating atmosphere reminders of Norway, but the characteristics of the population are much the same. In both we find a hardy, unspoiled race hidden away in nooks from all the outer world, quaint in speech and manners, gracious to strangers, contented and happy amid a stern environment of Nature.

Now that railways and steamships are affording such easy access to its shores, fiords, rivers, and lakes, there is no country so near England at the present hour which offers so many attractions to the sportsman and naturalist as Newfoundland.

The general character of the interior is highly favourable to the preservation of the game which abounds everywhere. Although there exist many thousands of acres of good forest-land, and of land suitable for farming purposes, yet there is a

vast area which is a region of lakes and marshes and moss-carpeted plains, intersected occasionally by low ridges of hills, covered with a stunted growth of spruce and fir trees. Here is a natural home of the ptarmigan, the plover and curlew, the wild duck and the Canada goose.

Across these barren lands wander vast numbers of caribou, in the summer retreating northward to feed and rear the calves of the herds in undisturbed solitudes; at the approach of winter migrating towards the southern shores, where the comparatively less depth of snow and more frequent thaws enable them to procure with greater ease the moss and lichens on which they subsist. At the season when the autumn frosts first begin to crisp the leaves and harden the soil, deer-stalking can be had in perfection. At the same time the ptarmigan, now well fattened on the wild berries, and beginning to turn white in plumage, will afford sport equal to that of the best Scotch moors.

The endless chain of lakes and rivers provide an unequalled field for exploration and sport to the disciple of Walton. He who has once carried his rod across Newfoundland is never likely to forget the experience. The excellence of the fishing, the beauty, wildness, and solitude of the country, the constantly recurring surprises of the changing scenery, all conspire to make this island, honey-combed as it is with lakes, and watered by innumerable streams and torrents, a veritable paradise of the trout angler.

There are no finer salmon streams anywhere than those of Newfoundland; yet, because no adequate means have been taken for their preservation, it is often difficult to obtain good salmon fishing. Such practices as closing the mouths of the rivers with nets at a time when the fish are ascending, and the construction of weirs, traps, and dams, have been followed to such an extent that in many good rivers salmon have been well-nigh exterminated.

Another difficulty is that in some rivers, notably the magnificent Humber, salmon will not take the fly. The present

writer has followed the Humber nearly to its sources, has watched scores of salmon leaping the falls, and darting hither and thither when pursued by seals, and has never yet induced a single fish to look at his Jock Scott or Durham ranger.

Yet even in Newfoundland there are tides in the affairs of salmon fishing which, taken at the flood, lead on to such success as is depicted in the illustrations to this paper. Let the reader accompany the writer to the banks of a typical Newfoundland stream on a day when the conditions are all favourable—one of those rare and precious coincidences to be ever afterwards cherished in the memory. It is the first week in July. A soft warm breeze from the west causes a faint ripple on the pool, and a cloud-flecked sky affords shadowed intervals for perfect casting.

There has been a gradual falling of the water for the last few days, and the fish appear to be awaiting the



TEN BEAUTIES.



advent of rain, bringing higher water, before attempting the ascent of the rapids. They are not suspicious, and are disposed to rise marvellously well even after the pool has been disturbed by the struggles of the victims already landed.

On the side of the stream where we stand there stretches out a smooth rocky ledge of gneiss rock sloping to the water, which makes an excellent landing.

Here fish after fish has been safely guided, till we can survey with pride a sight which must delight the heart of the most ambitious fisherman. As the sun gains power the fish become more wary, and finally cease to pay any attention to the cast.

The morning's sport is over. There remains the pipe to be enjoyed in silent contemplation of the row of gleaming beauties; then the long-delayed breakfast at the forest camp, where ends the path which threads the belt of stunted fir trees. Not only do we carry trophies thither, but memories which will never cease to warm the heart when amid scenes far different from these, a treasure of which the future can never dispossess us.

As the price of good or even indifferent salmon fishing in the old country becomes year by year more prohibitive, it is necessary for the sportsman with a slender purse to seek out new fields, or rather streams, where it is possible to indulge in his favourite pastime at a reasonable cost. This may fairly be expected in Newfoundland, where living, if not luxurious, is certainly cheap. In fact, except for the passage across the Atlantic and the supplies for camping-out, the expenses are practically nil, and it is to be hoped that many may turn their attention to this little-known sporting country, not only for the fishing to be found there, but also for the excellent shooting, which at least equals that to be had on a deer forest or grouse moor in Scotland.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### LABOURERS' COTTAGES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I have followed with much interest the particulars which you have published about cheap country cottages. As an architect I have tried for the past forty years to erect such buildings at prices which should render to the landlord a reasonable return for the outlay. Dr. Bussell is to be sincerely thanked for the publication of what he has been fortunate enough to accomplish;

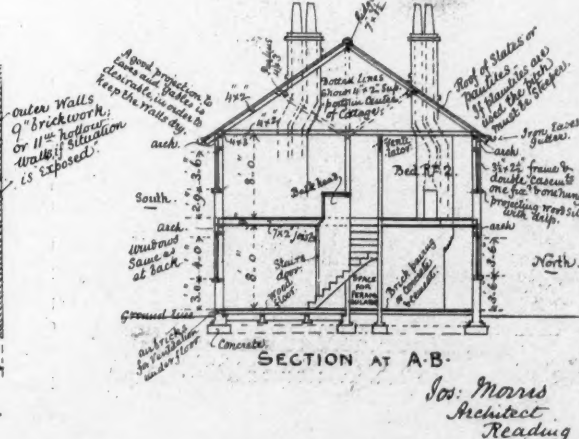
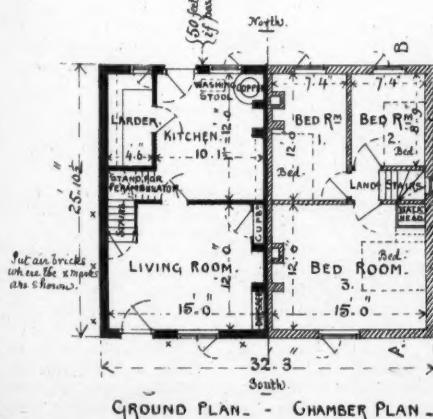


A FINAL STRUGGLE.

and, although his plan is by no means perfect, I feel reluctant to criticise it, and if I mention what appear to me to be defects, I do so in the kindest spirit. The following remarks relate alike to convenience and economy of construction, both of which are equally important, the latter especially, as a single shilling must not be needlessly spent. In all dwellings comfort and economy of fuel are gained by making fireplaces internal, and not upon external walls. Three chimney-stacks should not occur where two can be made to suffice. The straight staircase is the cheapest to make, but it can rarely be used in country cottages, and by its adoption Dr. Bussell has landed himself in a difficulty by being unable to enter the third bedroom without making the second a passage room, a most serious defect when these rooms would naturally be used by the boys and girls of the family. Cupboards against outside (gin.) walls are little use for keeping anything in. I enclose a plan which I have drawn (following the idea of that of Dr. Bussell), and which I have endeavoured to scheme in such a way as to give the greatest amount of accommodation and comfort in the most compact form, and I have figured the plans and section, and have given such further particulars as would enable alike the owner to use them as the basis of a sound contract with his builder, and the builder to make from them a definite estimate. The points of merit in my plan (if there be any) are explained by the criticisms which I have made upon Dr. Bussell's. I like the staircase to start from the living-room for many reasons, and amongst them that the warmth of the warmest room in the cottage is imparted to the upper floor. Much as I love and admire picturesque country cottages (of which I have built many), I am, in this instance, sacrificing all to the one point of cheapness, and follow Dr. Bussell in his span roof with gable ends. Cottages cannot be made pretty or picturesque without spending a considerable percentage of money in order to attain the desirable end which these adjectives express. Mr. Eden's plans which you published were prettily drawn, but the roof as he showed it would be very expensive as compared with Dr. Bussell's, and his small windows would fail to meet the requirements of those exacting bye-laws which now pervade most country districts. Mr. Eden also puts more than one window in a room, which is a piece of extravagance not to be admitted when the result of a £100 cottage is being aimed at. I must next come to the crucial point—viz., cost—and to do so must refer to the principle of "cubing," a means of estimating known to all builders, and to many amateurs also. Dr. Bussell's cottages if built for £200 tell out at only 2d. per foot cube, Mr. Eden's at £200 tell out at 2½d. per foot cube, whilst my own plan at £200 shows 2½d. per foot cube. It is thus evident that Mr. Eden's cottages are less in bulk than Dr. Bussell's, and mine considerably less than either, so that my plan ought to be the cheapest of the three, and no doubt is so. All these prices are exclusive of the outhouses, and are at a rate which few builders, if any, could afford to undertake to build cottages at. My own opinion is that (unless bricks can be obtained at £1 per 1,000, and for the digging, mechanics hired at £1 a week,



"COUNTRY LIFE" CHEAP COTTAGES—  
DESIGN—FOLLOWING THE IDEA OF DR. BUSSELL'S PLAN—  
Scale of Feet—



and labourers at 12s.) cottages such as Dr. Russell's could not be built for £200 a pair unless the contractor who should undertake them at that price is a heavy loser by his contract. What I have said might seem to cast doubt upon Dr. Russell's statement that his cottages have been built for £200. I have shown that I do not mean this by my previous remark that he was *fortunate* in having accomplished such a result. The last thing I desire is to throw a wet blanket over the rosy hope that cottages can be built at £200 a pair in country districts, but I feel sure that most who try the experiment will have to report that the £200 was spent before all the bills had been paid. However, I feel sure that the cottages shown by my plan are as cheap as any can possibly be of that size, and I hope that some of your readers will build a few pairs and let us know through your columns with what success. The same plan might be carried out for a row of four or six and some saving be thereby effected.—JOS. MORRIS.

#### CHEAP RIFLE TARGETS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

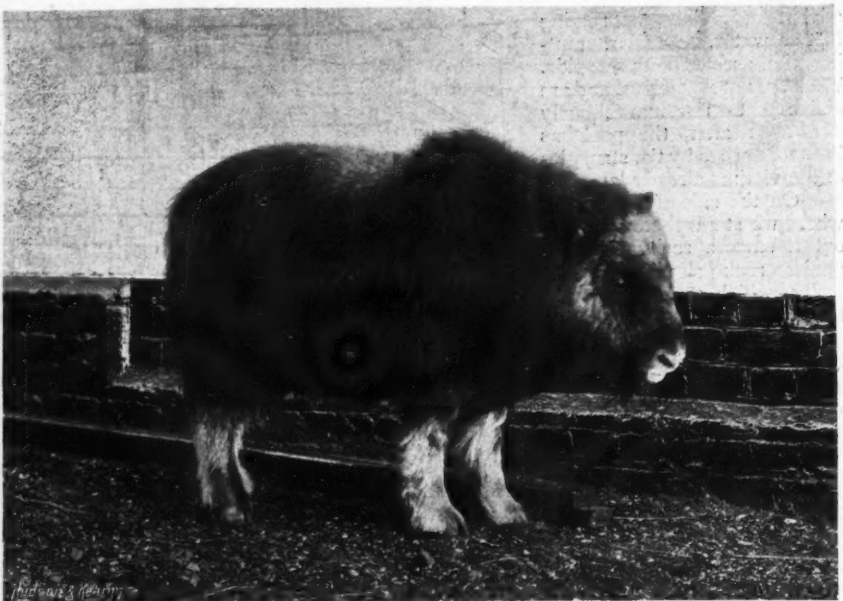
SIR,—Probably many of your readers would like when in the country to do some rifle practice, and, perhaps, to teach the young idea, either among their own friends or in the village, a little rudimentary rifle shooting. May I ask whether Mr. Baillie Grohman, or some other contributor to COUNTRY LIFE, would be so good as to describe a cheap and handy target and marker's shelter, with some estimate of the cost? Personally I only ask for this for a 100yds. range for the Service rifle. What size should the target be, and what sized "bull"? I assume that the enquirer, like myself, can find a place with a proper natural butt behind.—C. J. C.

[One hundred yards is not a range to be recommended for the Service rifle. One hundred and ten yards is used at Bisley for the Martin Smith Competition, in which sporting rifles of the most delicate precision are in vogue. There the marker stands in an iron shelter, not to mark, but simply to detach the targets when each man has fired and to affix them to an endless wire fixed to a wheel at either end, by which the register keeper can wind them up to the firing point. The targets are cardboard discs with a bull's-eye, if memory serves correctly, of zin. Nothing could be cheaper. For private practice the marker, marker's butt, and wire would be unnecessary, for the separate shots can easily be spotted with a glass, and the target could be fetched when necessary.—ED.]

#### A MURDER AND A THEORY.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—It has not been the best of weather for sitting in the summer-house lately, and for the most part we have been occupied with the fiercer joys of shooting. That is not to say that these exclude the more peaceful pleasures of observing, but the post of observation has less often been the summer-house. Still, there have been days, in this strangely mutable winter, when one might sit there with perfect content. It is only lately, however, that the signs of spring are appearing, such as snowdrops poking their white bells above the grass. It is by no means an early year for most things, though the rabbits have begun their nurseries sooner than usual. Most of the garden produce is late, and the birds do not seem in any hurry to anticipate the high festival of St. Valentine. The bullfinches, the rascals, have been about for a week or two at work on my plum trees. The men have been at work on the plum trees, too, cutting out the dead wood and thinning the excess of timber growth generally, but they tell me they cannot see any sign of the buds forming. I suspect, however, that the bullfinches must have sharper eyes, for they would not be about the trees unless the buds were there, that is very certain. For a week we have been free from their attacks, but only at the cost of the death of a fine male bird. A successful shot at long range from one of the windows of the house—to be sure it was a sitting shot—slew him, *flagrante delicto*, in the very act of pecking the bud. He was in the usual little company, a family party, no doubt, of five, in which they go marauding, and the manner of his death was peculiarly fortunate. (I may say that I love bullfinches, they are such jolly little birds, but I love plums, too. I should hate to see the bullfinches exterminated, as the goldfinches have been exterminated in not a few



MUSK OX AT WOBURN ARBEY.

parts of the land, but I do not want to see my plums exterminated either. My sentiments are in favour of some bullfinches and some plums, rather than a superfluity of either, to the annihilation of the other.) After this digressive apology, I will return to explain why the death of this regretted male bird was so exemplary. It occurred *coram populo*; all the rest of the company were looking on, the death was instantaneous, so the poor little bird did not suffer; its corpse hung a moment in the tree, then fell and lay on a clear place, to be observed by all. The death followed immediately on the opening of the window and the firing of the gun, and I know that the rest of the company of the banditti took all these moral lessons well to heart, because, when I went out to pick up the slain, they were still whistling softly to each other, in a puzzled way, a little further down the orchard. Obviously they were talking the matter over, with the result, apparently, that they recognised the wages of sin—in my orchard—are apt to be death. That is the position I want to establish, that death is apt to be the result. I do not want all bullfinches to die, but I want them to come to my orchard only under the fear of death, that is to say, not too often when plum buds are forming. A beautiful feature of this death, as I have recorded it, is that it occurred without anyone showing himself outside the house. The bullfinches cannot now say to themselves "We will go on picking till we see a man about—then it will be time to be off," for they know now that death can come without the apparition of any man. The insecurity that this consciousness must cause is obvious. And I have every hope that they will connect the sudden decease of their relative, not only with the sound of the gun, but also of the opening window, so that it may be sufficient to throw the window open with a clang in order to give them a salutary fright for the day. That is my desire—to affright them off, not to murder them. I believe I have achieved that by this fortunate shot. I commend the shooting from the house window or from the summer-house to all whom the bullfinches pester, for they seem to have suffered a worse fright from this one 'death' than from many deaths that have occurred before from a gunner skulking about the orchard. Alas! poor bully.—H.

#### WILD ANIMALS AT WOBURN.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I beg to enclose two photographs which may be of interest to some of your readers. One is of a young musk ox, which has been some time in our possession, and which was imported from Clavering Island, East Greenland. I am not aware of any other musk ox having been photographed from life before. The other photograph shows a black fallow fawn, about a day old, as hidden in long rough grass by its mother.—X. V. Z.

#### WOOD STAIN.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I am anxious to put up panelling in a dining-room in an old-fashioned country house and have a quantity of yellow pine wood, which is suitable for my purpose in every respect except that of colour, which is too light to be in keeping with the room. Would any of your readers recommend a stain which would darken the colour of the wood without giving it the cheap and vulgar appearance of most wood stains?—COUNTRYMAN.

[The "cheap and vulgar appearance" given by most wood stains is really more a matter of application than of the quality of the stain. If the wood is properly planed to receive it, and properly polished or varnished afterwards, the result need not be tawdry. If the surface be left with the fibres at all staring before the stain is applied, the result is horrid. There are so many good dark stains that it is really impossible to specify any one, so much necessarily depending on the furniture and fittings of the room with which it has to harmonise. Many of the dark purplish brown hues into which logwood enters so largely would probably suit, or with the red curtains, hangings, or paper that people sometimes affect in the dining-room the hue known as "dragon's blood"—the colour with which red violins are tinted—might go well. But this is matter of individual taste. Proper preparation of the wood before staining and good polishing afterwards are the essentials for good effect.—ED.]



A FAWN ONE DAY OLD.